

DRAFT  
MARCH 2024

TOWN OF  
LANSING  
Open Space  
Conservation Plan



# Acknowledgments

The Conservation Advisory Council thanks its members, community stakeholders and residents, and Town staff and officials who contributed to the drafting of this Open Space Conservation Plan. The CAC members volunteered their invaluable time, knowledge, and leadership towards the development of this document. The generous public input provided by community stakeholders and residents was integral to defining the community's vision and shaping the goals identified in this Plan. Finally, Town staff and officials, in an effort to enhance the quality of life for Lansing residents, were responsible for the initiation and completion of this Plan.

## Conservation Advisory Council

- Robyn Bailey
- Tom Butler (former member)
- Adam Buck
- Gabrielle Desnoes
- Edward Dubovi, Chair
- Karen Edelstein (former member)
- John Fleming
- Carrie Koplinka-Loehr (former member)
- Todd Walter
- David Wolfe (former member)

**The CAC wants to acknowledge the key role that the farming community in Lansing plays in the conservation of our open space and other natural resources. Farmers have been good stewards of our land for 200 years and will continue to be over the next 200 years. As a result, it is critical to work with the farmers and owners of large pieces of property to accomplish our collective goals and preserve our quality of life.**

# Acronyms

Several agencies, organizations, and planning terms are referenced throughout this document. This list defines the acronyms for the most commonly used titles and names:

CAC:	Conservation Advisory Council
CSD:	Conservation Subdivision Design
DEC:	Department of Environmental Conservation
EPOD:	Environmental Protection Overlay District
FEMA:	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FLLT:	Finger Lakes Land Trust
GIS:	Geographic Information Systems
NLCD:	National Land Cover Database
NRI:	Natural Resources Inventory
NWI:	National Wetland Inventory
NYS:	New York State
OSCP:	Open Space Conservation Plan
OSI:	Open Space Index
PDR:	Purchase of Development Rights
SRI:	Scenic Resources Inventory
TDR:	Transfer of Development Rights
UNA:	Unique Natural Area
US:	United States

## Plan Prepared By:



**Engineering  
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Photo: Lansing Resident



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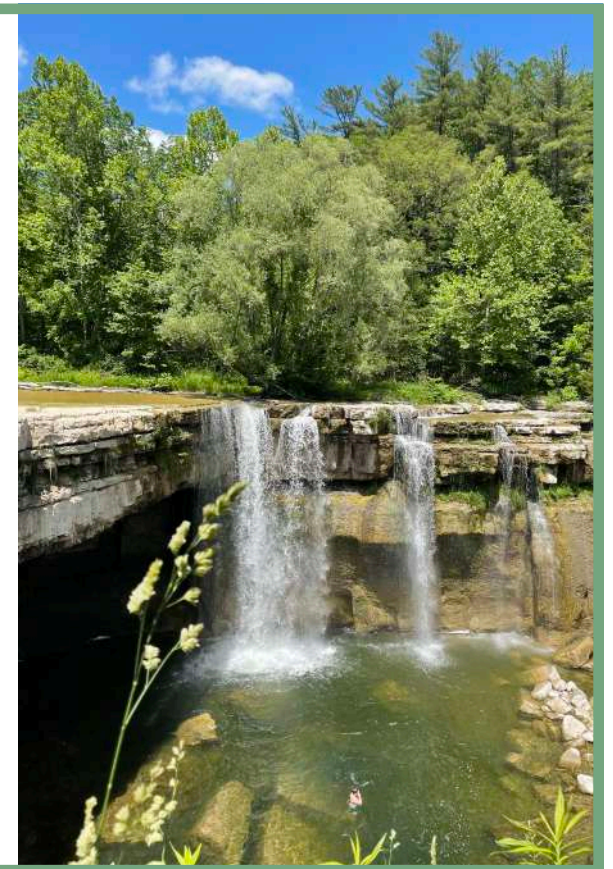
# Executive Summary

The Town of Lansing is fortunate to be home to a rich abundance of open spaces, natural resources, and scenic vistas. In order to fully understand the extent of these natural resources the Town tasked the Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) with the development of a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI), which was completed in 2021. Building upon the momentum of the NRI, the CAC was then tasked with the development of this Open Space Conservation Plan (OSCP). These tasks were identified as a part of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2018.

The OSCP is intended to inventory and prioritize the Town's abundant open spaces. This prioritization allows the Town to understand where the highest value open spaces exist, and thus where to focus potential future funding, programming, and other conservation efforts. The OSCP also presents potential implementation strategies to achieve the vision of the OSCP, as follows:

## Open Space Vision

"Vast open spaces, scenic vistas, and an abundance of natural resources are the defining features of the Town of Lansing, and are invaluable assets to the community's residents and leaders. As such, Lansing will protect and celebrate its open spaces and natural resources to maintain its identity and preserve the rich quality of life that they afford the Town's residents. The Town will prioritize conservation efforts, and will develop and maintain strong partnerships with local agencies, organizations, and the farming community to accomplish its goals while supporting their efforts. This will require thoughtful planning and strategic actions to ensure that this vision and the community's goals are realized. These efforts will allow for enhanced community access and recreation, uplift local property values, and ensure the protection of crucial environmental resources that will enhance the Town's resiliency and sustainability for years to come."



The contents of this Plan were steered by public input, including several public outreach events, a community survey, and a series of stakeholder meetings. The ranking process was crafted based on the values identified as a part of the community survey, and was reviewed alongside the priority areas identified by the public early on in the process. Ultimately, the conservation efforts that stem from the OSCP are intended to provide a wide range of benefits, including:

- **Maintaining scenic vistas**
- **Increasing public access and recreation opportunities**
- **Enhancing climate resiliency**
- **Reducing flooding risks**
- **Improving water and air quality**
- **Conserving wildlife habitats**
- **Improving public health outcomes**
- **Increasing property values**
- **Protecting community character and quality of life**

The Plan contains an inventory and analysis of existing natural features in the Town, generally summarizing the content of the NRI. The Vision, as stated on the previous page, and the six goals of this Plan are then presented, which are as follows:



**Maintain the agrarian heritage of the Town and preserve its scenic beauty.**



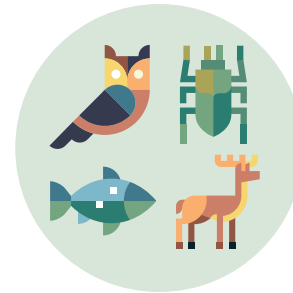
**Preserve agriculture as a viable economic sector in Lansing.**



**Build local resiliency to climate change impacts.**



**Enhance resident quality of life through scenic and recreational resources.**



**Protect our local ecosystem and support wildlife habitat.**



**Ensure long-term sustainability of our water, air, and land resources.**

The ranking process is contained within the Open Space Index (OSI) section of the Plan. The Open Space Index (OSI) provides a systematic rating of land across the Town based on various natural features and other open space characteristics. The OSI enables the Town to be strategic in its allocation of funds and efforts by providing a tool to both proactively identify parcels and resources that meet the goals of the open space program, and to analyze the merits of individual projects and opportunities as they present themselves. The following steps were utilized to create the OSI:

## Step 1. Establish Ranking Criteria

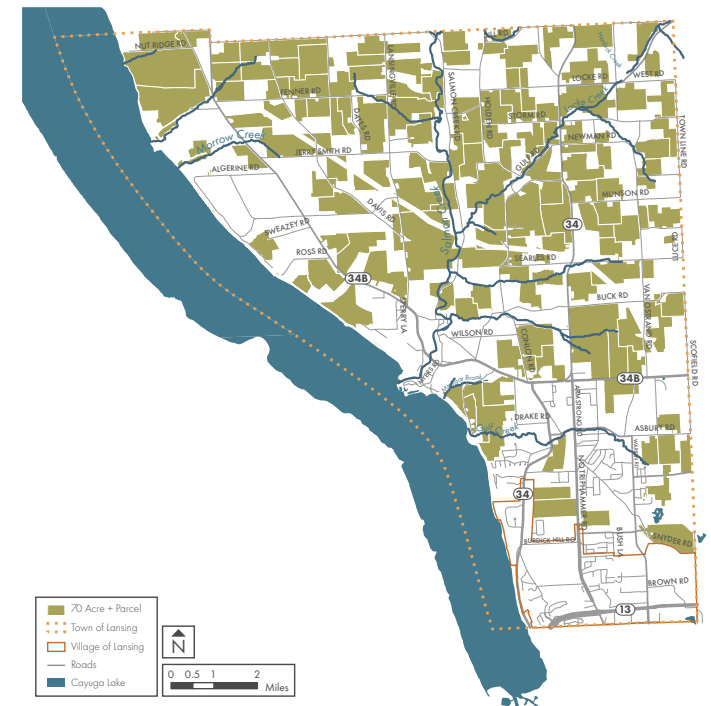
To determine the relative value of each open space parcel identified, and apply consistent criteria for evaluating each parcel, the project team developed a ranked list of criteria to evaluate each parcel. The CAC developed the list of evaluation criteria used based on Question 6 in the Community Survey, but further refined it to include additional attributes of the landscape that were deemed essential to include through discussions of the CAC. The table on the right illustrates the categories used and their respective rank compared to the other criteria. Associated with the relative value of each criteria, a weighted value for each category was assigned that was applied to the scoring. This ensured that the most important criteria to the community was given additional emphasis during the scoring process.

Criteria	Rank	Weighted Value
Susceptibility to Development	1	10
Unique Natural Areas	2	9
Stream Corridors	3	8
Significant Wildlife Habitat	4	6
Cayuga Lakefront	4	6
Steep Slopes	6	4
Forests & Woodlots	6	4
Wetlands	8	3
Grasslands & Meadows	9	2
Agriculture & Farmlands	9	2
Floodplains	11	1

## Step 2. Identify parcels to be evaluated

For the purposes of this Plan, the CAC only evaluated parcels that were at least 70 acres in size. The evaluation included all parcels within this size threshold, regardless of existing land use, which resulted in a total of 119 parcels analyzed. The map to the right shows the parcels analyzed, and the breakdown of properties analyzed by land use is as follows:

- 75 Agricultural Parcels
- 18 Residential Parcels
- 17 Vacant Parcels
- 4 Industrial Parcels
- 2 Commercial Parcels
- 2 Community Services Parcels
- 2 Recreation Parcels
- 1 Public Service Parcel



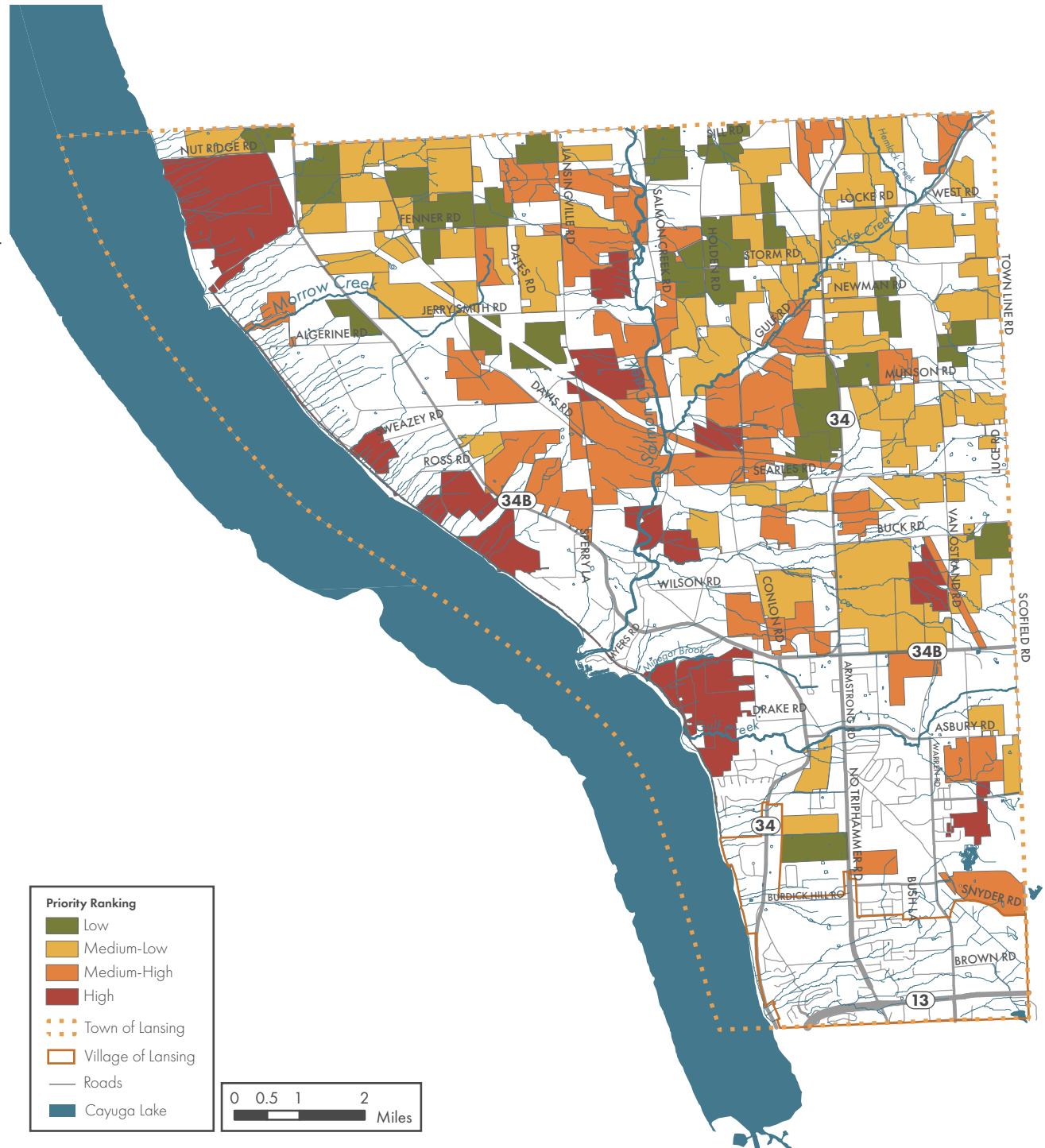
### Step 3. Analyze data for each parcel and assign scoring

Prior to assigning the weighting factor established for each category, the project team assigned each parcel an unweighted value between 0 and 3 for each of the 11 categories. These points were assigned based on an overlay analysis performed using GIS, that depicted the spatial relationship between the characteristic in question (e.g., farmlands) and the parcel.

### Step 4. Compile results

Once the project team assigned unweighted scores to each parcel for each category, a weighting factor was applied to each value for each category. The project team then summed the weighted values for each parcel to develop an overall comparative ranking, which translated into "High," "Medium-High," "Medium-Low," and "Low" priority parcels in regard to open space value. The results of this ranking process are displayed at right, and listed below:

- **Low priority:** 8%, or 22 parcels
- **Medium-low priority:** 41%, or 49 parcels
- **Medium-high priority:** 26% or 31 parcels
- **High priority:** 14% or 17 parcels







STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	COST	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
<b>Land Conservation</b>				
<b>New York State Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program through Tompkins County</b>	Participate in the NYS PDR - a voluntary program that involves a landowner selling the development rights of a parcel. The landowner maintains all other rights and responsibilities, and can use or sell it for purposes allowed in the easement.	\$\$\$	<b>Tompkins Co.</b> , Cornell Cooperative Extension, NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets, Town Planning Dept.	Short
<b>Purchase of land</b>	Acquire undeveloped land. Requires significant capital for the purchase and long term stewardship of land.	\$\$\$	Town Board, Town Planning Dept., CAC, FLLT, Tompkins Co. , NYS Parks	Ongoing
<b>Conservation Easement</b>	Create a voluntary legal agreement that protects the natural resources of a parcel of land by restricting future development permanently, but could allow other activities such as farming or public access. Agreement is held between landowner and a government or land trust. Easement can be donated or sold.	N/A - \$\$\$	Town Board, Town Planning Dept., CAC, FLLT, Tompkins Co. , American Farmland Trust, Open Space Institute, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets, US Dept. of Agriculture	Ongoing
<b>Transfer of Development Rights</b>	Create a voluntary program that involves a landowner selling the development rights of their property within a certain area (sending area) to a developer, who can then use these rights to increase the density of development within another specified area (receiving area).	\$\$ - \$\$\$	Town Board, <b>Town Planning Dept.</b> , Planning Board, CAC, Agriculture & Farmland Protection Committee	Long
<b>Tompkins Co. Natural Infrastructure Capital Program</b>	Participate in the County's Natural Infrastructure Capital Program, which provides funding to protect natural systems that can help mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change. Tompkins County will cover up to 1/3 of the assessed value of an eligible property, up to a maximum of \$200,000.	\$\$\$	<b>Tompkins Co.</b> , FLLT, Town Planning Department, Town Board, CAC	Long
<b>Other Implementation Options</b>				
<b>Low impact/Green Development</b>	Utilize green infrastructure and low-impact design to lessen the impacts of development on natural resources.	\$	Town Planning Dept., Planning Board, <b>Private Developers</b>	Ongoing
<b>Conservation Board Establishment</b>	Gain approval by the Town Board and adopt the OSCP as the Town's official index of open space. This will result in the existing CAC being eligible to become a Conservation Board (CB).	N/A - \$	<b>Town Board</b> , CAC	Short
<b>Increase Administrative Capacity of Town</b>	Add staff to the Town's municipal operations. This would allow for increased administrative capacity and more active open space conservation efforts, such as applying for grant funds.	\$\$ - \$\$\$	<b>Town Board</b> , Town Staff	Long

# Introduction

## Background

One of the Town of Lansing's most identifiable attributes is its abundance of open spaces and scenic vistas. Dramatic gorges, vast fields, mature forests, and the Cayuga lakefront are spread across the Town's landscape, contributing significantly to wildlife habitat, environmental sustainability, and the Town's aesthetic character. Lansing has taken a proactive approach to recognizing these benefits, and has recently developed a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) and Scenic Resources Inventory (SRI) to begin to inventory the assets and resources that comprise and contribute to the Town's rich abundance of open spaces. In order to further plan for and prioritize these open spaces, the Town has undertaken this Open Space Conservation planning process to move towards an action plan for maintaining the community character of Lansing amidst growing development pressures.

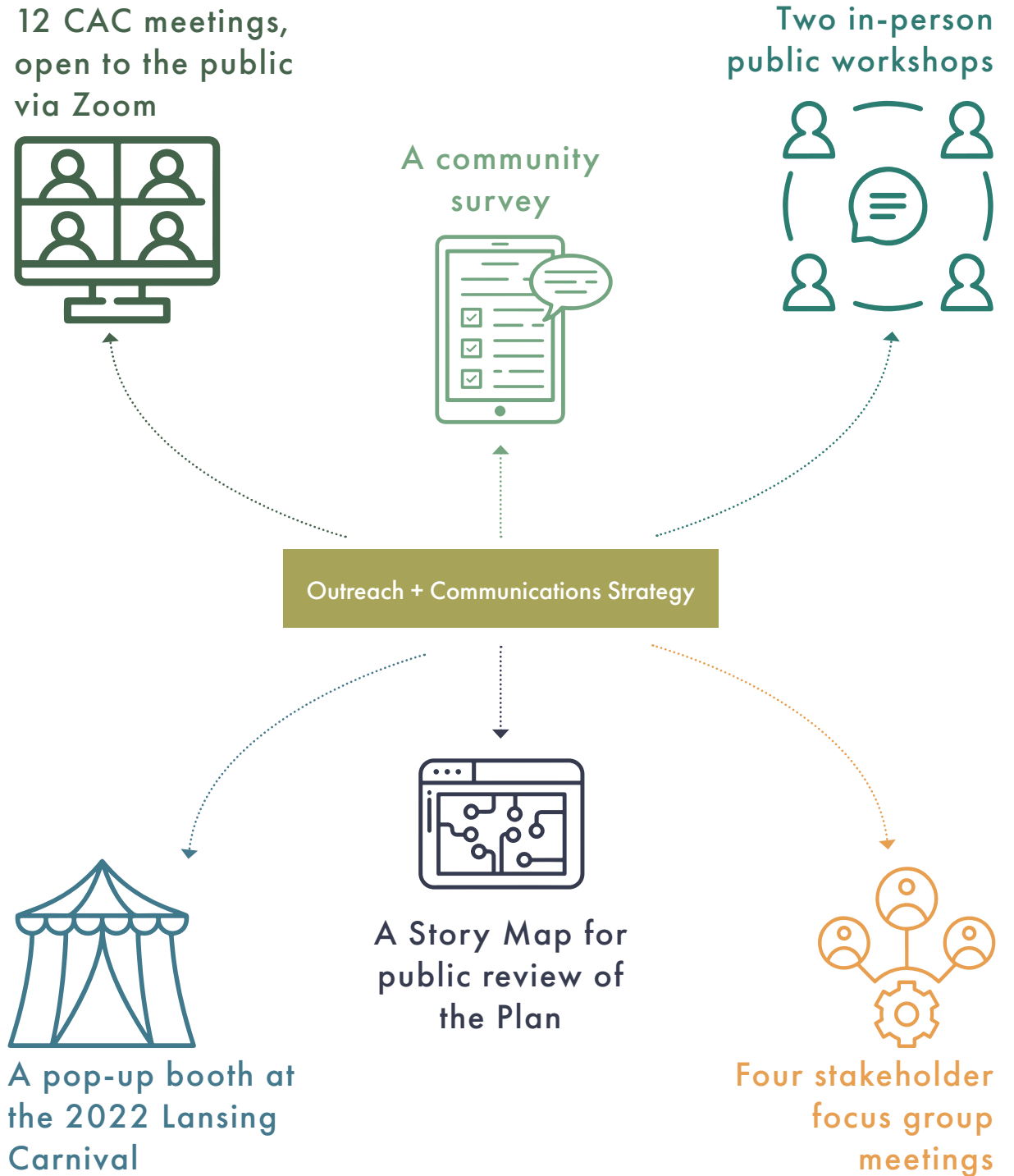
## Plan Purpose

The purpose of the Open Space Conservation Plan (OSCP) is to prioritize open space protection efforts across the Town. The Plan's intent is to provide a well-informed roadmap for future actions pertaining to the maintenance and celebration of the generous open spaces that characterize Lansing. This Plan accomplishes this by analyzing the existing assets and resources within the Town, and conducting a prioritization exercise that will allow the Town to make informed decisions towards conservation and development efforts in the future. Furthermore, the Plan lays out an implementation strategy that identifies key actions and strategies that the Town can undertake to accomplish the community-wide vision for its open spaces. The Town will utilize this Plan to both target high-value conservation efforts and identify ways to mitigate impacts to the environment during the land development process. While identifying a framework for future actions, it is important to recognize that this plan's implementation will require follow-on activities such as regulatory amendments, feasibility studies, and more in-depth analysis of individual properties as projects and opportunities arise. Furthermore, the Town recognizes that any future conservation efforts must be balanced with thoughtful and context-appropriate development. The concentration of development in designated areas of Town can help facilitate the conservation of precious natural resources in less developed areas of Lansing.

Photo: Lansing Resident

## Engagement Summary

Public engagement occurred throughout this planning process and played an important role in identifying community needs, values, and potential conservation opportunities. The public outreach efforts throughout the planning process helped to ensure that the Plan reflects the Town's values and vision for future conservation efforts by engaging community members in an inviting atmosphere that encourages input from all residents. To maximize community involvement, the project team, including the CAC, the consultant team, and town staff, developed and implemented a flexible Communications & Outreach Strategy that identified key players, desired outcomes, timing, and methods for public engagement, which is available within the Appendix of this Plan. The major components of the strategies employed are summarized below, as well as in the graphic at right. A full summary of public engagement results is available within the Appendix of this Plan.



## Public Meeting #1

The project team held the first public meeting for the Plan on Tuesday, November 15, 2022 at the Lansing Town Hall. The intent of the meeting was to inform the public of the Plan's purpose and expected outcomes, share the work performed to date, solicit input regarding issues and opportunities pertaining to open space conservation in the Town, and promote awareness of the ongoing community survey effort. Some of the themes of the key issues and opportunities discussed are summarized below:

- New development should be restricted to near existing development and public utilities
- Flooding and erosion of local waterways is of concern
- Connected trails and parks are important assets
- The Town must foster and sustain productive working relationships with local farmers
- Vegetative buffers alongside streams and crop fields should be maintained and enhanced



## Public Meeting #2

The project team held a second public meeting for the OSCP on Thursday, November 9, 2023 at the Lansing Town Hall. The public meeting was held in an open house style format, with presentation boards displayed for attendees to view at their convenience and the project team available for informal discussion and to answer questions. A brief introduction was made by Town Staff, the CAC, and the consultant team to give an overview of the project and the anticipated outcomes of the evening. Afterwards, attendees viewed the contents of the Plan on presentation boards, and engaged in dialogue with each other and the project team. Written comments were provided by some attendees, which are summarized in the full Public Meeting summary, available in the Plan Appendix. The comments generally surrounded action items the Town should consider moving forward with, including but not limited to the development of a Purchase of Development Rights program, involvement with the Tompkins County Planning Department, the Cargill property, the railroad right of way, and obtaining funding for implementation of the Plan's recommendations.





## Pop-Up Event

The project team held a pop-up event on Saturday, September 24, 2022 at the Lansing Carnival. The team engaged in informal conversations with attendees to inform them of the project and to learn more about what residents and visitors would like to see in the future in the Town regarding open space conservation. Attendees were able to provide input on maps regarding where they lived and where they would like to see open space conserved in the Town. The team also launched the community survey for the Plan at the pop-up event, which was available virtually as well as in hard copy. Some of the feedback received included interest in screening/buffering solar development, improvements to Myers Park, creating habitat for birds and other animals, the potential for developing a rail trail along the railroad right-of-way, and identification of several specific sites for potential conservation.



## Community Survey

In order to better understand community values and opinions regarding Lansing's open space areas and to identify priority locations for conservation efforts, the project team distributed a community survey. The team published the survey online, and also developed a hard copy version which was available at the Lansing Town Hall for the duration of the survey period. The survey consisted of 12 questions pertaining to open space conservation efforts in the Town, as well as seven demographic questions. As part of the traditional community survey, the project team developed and distributed an online interactive map survey. The map asked users to identify specific locations that they would like to see conserved in the Town, and add any comments and/or photos for the location. The survey went live on September 24, 2022, and was held open until November 30, 2022. There were 441 responses in total, and a full summary of the results of the survey can be found in the Plan's Appendix.

## Stakeholder Meetings

The project team conducted a series of stakeholder focus group meetings with targeted individuals between November 8-9, 2022 to understand key local context, issues, and opportunities. Stakeholders included local agency staff, Planning Board members, the Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT), and local farmers.

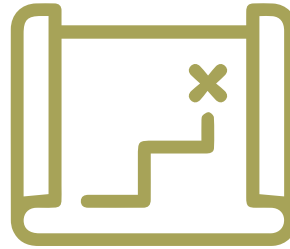
## How Will This Plan Be Used?

This Plan was developed in accordance with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan, the Town's principal guiding document that addresses all aspects of community life in Lansing. While the contents of this Plan are focused on open space conservation and its benefits, it does not detract from the other goals of the community, particularly when it comes to thoughtful development in the community for housing, commercial development, and other uses. Rather, this Plan is intended to serve as a tool to consider the potential impacts of development on the Town's natural resources, and identify priority areas for targeting conservation. Two example scenarios are presented on the following pages to help illustrate the potential utilization of this Plan in the future.

### THIS PLAN DOES:



Identify high-value open space areas



Provide guidance for potential future conservation actions



Create a tool for decision makers to use when reviewing development proposals

### THIS PLAN DOES NOT:



Place additional restrictions on farming operations



Set the stage for eminent domain in any way



Limit or restrict existing activities or uses

# Example Scenario #1:

## Interested Property Owner A

A property owner in Lansing owns a large piece of land, which Salmon Creek runs through, creating scenic gorges and unique wildlife habitat. Pressure from increased development in the region has pushed the value of the parcel up in recent years to the point where the family is concerned about how the next generation will pay the property tax bill without selling the land.

The family wants to see their land maintained as undeveloped in the community. Therefore, the property owner approaches the Town with an interest in a conservation easement for the property. The Town reviews the Open Space Index (OSI), and upon review, determines that the parcel has a high priority level for conservation.

Given this, the Town agrees to support the project, and assists the property owner in applying for the Purchase of Development Rights program with Tompkins County, ultimately leading to the property owner being compensated for the development rights of the land, while maintaining ownership of the land. In this scenario, the Town may also assist the landowner in working with other organizations, such as the Finger Lakes Land Trust, to obtain a conservation easement.

# Example Scenario #2:

## Interested Property Owner B

A property owner in Lansing owns a property in the southern area of Town, and approaches the Town about the potential tax benefits of obtaining a conservation easement. The parcel has limited natural resources, and thus upon review of the OSI, the Town identifies the parcel as a low-priority parcel. Given this, the Town notifies the landowner that the parcel is not a priority for conservation by the Town, and saves its administrative and financial resources for future interested property owners with higher value parcels in regards to open space conservation. This property owner is free to pursue conservation of their land on their own.

## What is Open Space?

Open space can hold a variety of meanings. Often what comes to mind includes ecological resources such as wildlife habitat, wetlands, forests, and grasslands; hydrological resources such as stream corridors and the Cayuga Lake shore, and scenic vistas and places where people can observe these features. Most of these resources have been documented within the Town’s existing Natural Resources Inventory, but open space also includes farmland, undeveloped areas of residential lots, and recreational facilities. Most of the open spaces in Lansing are privately owned, but some are owned by public entities or organizations such as the Finger Lakes Land Trust and are available for public access. While recreational activity can be an added benefit of open space conservation, this was not a focus of this Plan. For more information regarding parks and recreational facilities, please refer to the Town of Lansing’s Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan.

## Why Conserve Open Space?

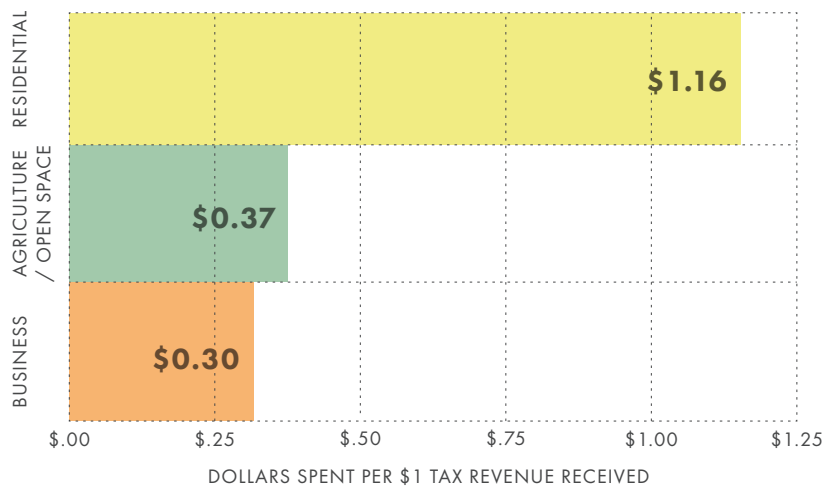
The benefits of conservation efforts are numerous, and include but are not limited to: economic benefits, environmental benefits, and social benefits.



The economic impacts of open space conservation include both direct monetary benefits to individuals or governments, as well as indirect impacts such as avoided costs or appreciation of assets. These benefits include, but are not limited to:

- **Property Values:** Studies have shown that homeowners are willing to pay increased housing costs to live in proximity to open space, particularly when adjacent lands cannot be developed, resulting in higher sale values and thus higher government revenues from property tax collection.<sup>1</sup>
- **Job Creation/Retention:** Open space can create a variety of employment opportunities, which includes the maintenance of farming as a viable industry in the Town, which is currently a significant component of the Town’s economic base. Open space also often supports tourism and outdoor recreation, which can spur additional investment in supportive businesses such as rental shops, restaurants and drinking establishments; as well as park and conservation staff employment opportunities.
- **Reduced Community Service Costs:** Another significant benefit is the reduced cost of provision of public services that is required for open space when compared to other land uses. Several fiscal impact studies<sup>2</sup> have shown that residential development often results in a net fiscal loss for communities, when comparing the tax revenue raised versus the cost of providing public services. The graphic at left shows the median cost to provide public services for each dollar of revenue raised, as shown by Cost of Community Services (COCS) Studies performed by the American Farmland Trust.<sup>2</sup>

MEDIAN COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES



1: Irwin, E. G. (2022). The Effects of Open Space on Residential Property Values. *Land Economics*, 78(4), 465–480.

2: American Farmland Trust. (2016). (publication). *Cost of Community Services Studies*. Retrieved 2023, from <https://farmlandinfo.org>



# Case Study: Chester County, PA

In 2019, Chester County produced a “Return on Environment” report, which estimates the economic value and impacts of protected open space in five categories: property values, environmental benefits, recreation and health, economic activity, and cost of community services. Some of the findings of this report are summarized below, which speak to the potential economic benefits of open space conservation efforts in Lansing:

**\$1.65 billion** added to the value of housing stock

From 1981 - 2017, there was an average increase of \$11,000 in the value of homes in Chester County that are located up to 1/2 mile from protected open space, totaling an estimated \$1.65 billion.

**\$397 million** in avoided stormwater management costs

These costs include \$263 million of avoided capital costs for construction of stormwater management systems, \$27 million of annual operation and maintenance expenses, and \$108 million of annual stormwater pollutant removal costs.

**\$172 million** in medical costs avoided annually

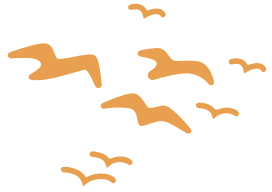
Physical activity can help reduce incidences of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, depression, certain cancers, and obesity. It is estimated that such activity that occurs on the County’s open spaces results in \$172 million in avoided medical costs annually.

**\$238 million** in local spending

An estimated \$238 million dollars was spent in the County related to tourism, purchase of local farm goods, and government spending for the management and maintenance of open space.

3: Chester County Planning Commission. (2019a). (rep.). *Return on Environment: The Economic Value of Protected Open Space in Chester County, PA*. Retrieved 2023, from <https://www.chesco.org>

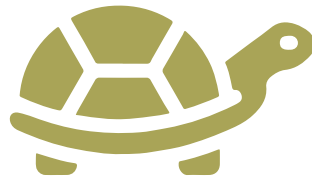
# Environmental Benefits



Rest areas for migrating birds and insects



Flood and erosion control by holding water after heavy rain events.



Conservation of wildlife habitat



Replenishment and filtration of local water supply

There are numerous environmental benefits of open space conservation efforts, ranging from localized microclimate benefits to working towards long-range sustainability and resiliency goals.

- **Air Quality Improvements:** Research shows that trees and other vegetation can reduce particulate pollution by absorbing and filtering particulate matter.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, vegetation can reduce air temperatures and reduce ground level ozone or smog.
- **Climate Resiliency:** Climate change will continue to have adverse impacts to communities across the globe, and in Upstate New York this often presents itself as severe weather events and increased precipitation. The conservation of crucial ecosystems that are designed to retain stormwater (such as wetlands), as well as the protection of sensitive landscapes, particularly those subject to erosion, will reduce the risk of flooding impacts to property.
- **Water Quality:** Vegetated stream corridors and forest lands help to slow water down as it moves through the watershed, which allows it to be filtered. This helps to remove any particulate matter or pollution that has been collected as stormwater moves over impervious surfaces or agricultural land - thus protecting the water quality of the Town and the region as a whole.
- **Wildlife Habitat:** Open space provides crucial habitat for all native wildlife populations and supports biodiversity, which has significant impacts on the long-term sustainability of the local ecosystem.
- **Reduced Emissions:** By designating land as open space, the greenhouse gas emissions of the materials, construction, and operation of new development in the Town are avoided.

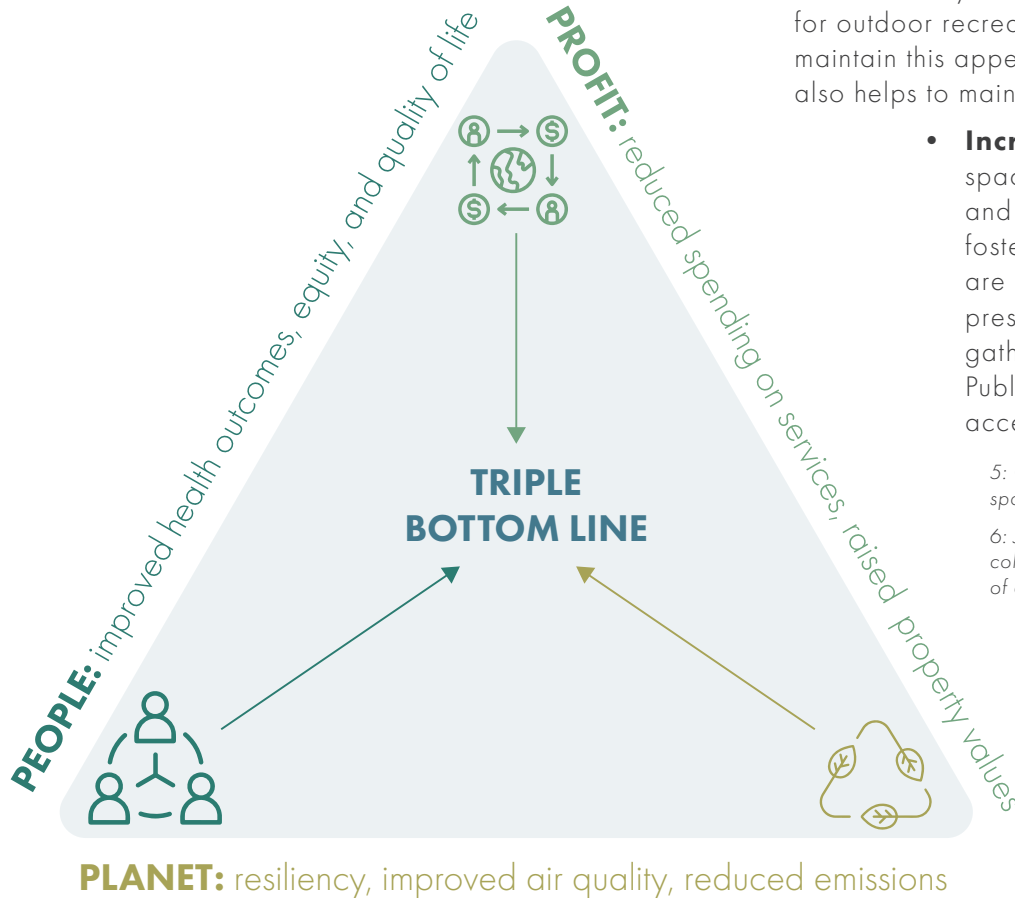
4: Nowak, David J., Satoshi Hirabayashi, Allison Bodine, and Eric Greenfield. "Tree and forest effects on air quality and human health in the United States." *Environmental pollution* 193 (2014): 119-129.

# Social Benefits



Social benefits include benefits for both residents of Lansing as well as the broader regional population. It should also be noted that many of these social benefits have implied financial benefits, as discussed in the examples below:

- Public Health Improvements:** There is a wide body of research that suggests that access to open space can improve public health metrics, both physical and mental.<sup>5</sup> This is due to a variety of factors, including but not limited to increased opportunity for physical activity, air quality improvements, increased shade during warmer months, and stress reduction. As suggested above, improved overall community health can result in reduced healthcare spending on both the individual and collective level.
- Quality of Life Benefits:** One of the strongest messages received during the public input process of this Plan was how important the Town’s open spaces were to the character and quality of life in the Town. People are drawn to live and stay in the community due to the breathtaking scenery and opportunities for outdoor recreation. Open space conservation will help to maintain this appeal for both new and existing residents, which also helps to maintain property values in the Town.
- Increased Social Cohesion:** The Town’s open spaces not only create a sense of shared identity and pride in the community, but also can help foster improved social cohesion in those areas that are dedicated for public access.<sup>6</sup> Parks and nature preserves support opportunities for neighbors to gather and interact, both formally and informally. Public access also allows for increased equitable access to natural resources.



<sup>5</sup>: Groenewegen, P.P., van den Berg, A.E., de Vries, S. et al. Vitamin G: effects of green space on health, well-being, and social safety. *BMC Public Health* 6, 149 (2006).

<sup>6</sup>: Jennings, Vinièce, and Omoshalewa Bankole. “The relationship between social cohesion and urban green space: An avenue for health promotion.” *International journal of environmental research and public health* 16.3 (2019): 452.

The social (people), economic (profit), and environmental (planet) benefits of open space conservation all contribute to what is often called the “triple bottom line,” which expands traditional success metrics to a more comprehensive analysis of proposed actions or investments.

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Photo: Colliers Engineering & Design



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

This section provides a comprehensive overview of existing open spaces and natural features within the Town and serves as the basis for identifying opportunities for open space conservation efforts in Lansing. The following topics are covered in this section:

- Regional Context
- Natural Resource Inventory
- Scenic Resource Inventory
- Water Resources
- Slope + Topography
- Geology + Soils
- Land Use + Land Cover
- Unique Natural Areas
- Agricultural Resources
- Wildlife Habitats
- Protected Lands
- Parks, Open Spaces, + Trails

# Inventory + Analysis

The Town of Lansing is characterized by a rich abundance of unique natural areas, water resources, scenic vistas, and other features within its open spaces. These assets create value and meaning in conserving open space in Lansing, and thus are identified within this section as a means to develop a framework for prioritization of conservation efforts in the Town. This Inventory & Analysis relies heavily on the previous work conducted for the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) and Scenic Resource Inventory (SRI) as the basis for this analysis, which are described below.

## Natural Resource Inventory (NRI)

The CAC, in partnership with the Cornell University Department of City and Regional Planning and the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, prepared a town-wide [Natural Resource Inventory](#) (NRI) 2021, building off and adding local context to the Tompkins County's 2001 NRI. The NRI acts as "a source of information on the ecological and economic value of natural resource assets within the Town of Lansing, New York, to facilitate future planning, development, and conservation efforts." The NRI is a natural predecessor to this Open Space Conservation Plan, and serves as a preliminary inventory of the natural resources that are found within the Town's open spaces. Thus, this section builds upon the successes of the NRI, and summarizes its data and analysis as the foundation for the future-oriented sections of this Plan. Readers are encouraged to read the entire NRI for more detailed analysis, found on the Town's website.

## Scenic Resource Inventory (SRI)

Also produced in 2021 by the Lansing Conservation Advisory Council, the [Scenic Resource Inventory](#) (SRI) provides a database of 42 scenic resources, 20 of which are classified as "Distinctive," and 22 as "Noteworthy." The CAC developed the SRI in an effort to pursue one of the goals of the Town's Comprehensive Plan to "preserve scenic resources that contribute to the Town's unique character." One of the primary objectives of the OSCP is to further the successes of the SRI, and to develop strategies to maintain these identified scenic resources. Therefore, the data produced as part of the SRI is also an integral component of the Inventory & Analysis section of this Plan. Readers are encouraged to read the entire SRI found on the Town's website.

## Additional Data Resources

Outside of the data analyzed for the NRI and SRI, this Section will analyze additional characteristics of the Town that contribute to its open spaces. Such information will include agricultural resources, including active farms, protected farmland, and prime agricultural soils. This section will also include information regarding wildlife habitats, such as those for rare and endangered species. Lastly, the plan will look at existing preserved open spaces, such as any land protected by conservation easements, or park spaces and trails that contribute to the overall open space of Lansing and provide public access to the Town's natural resources.

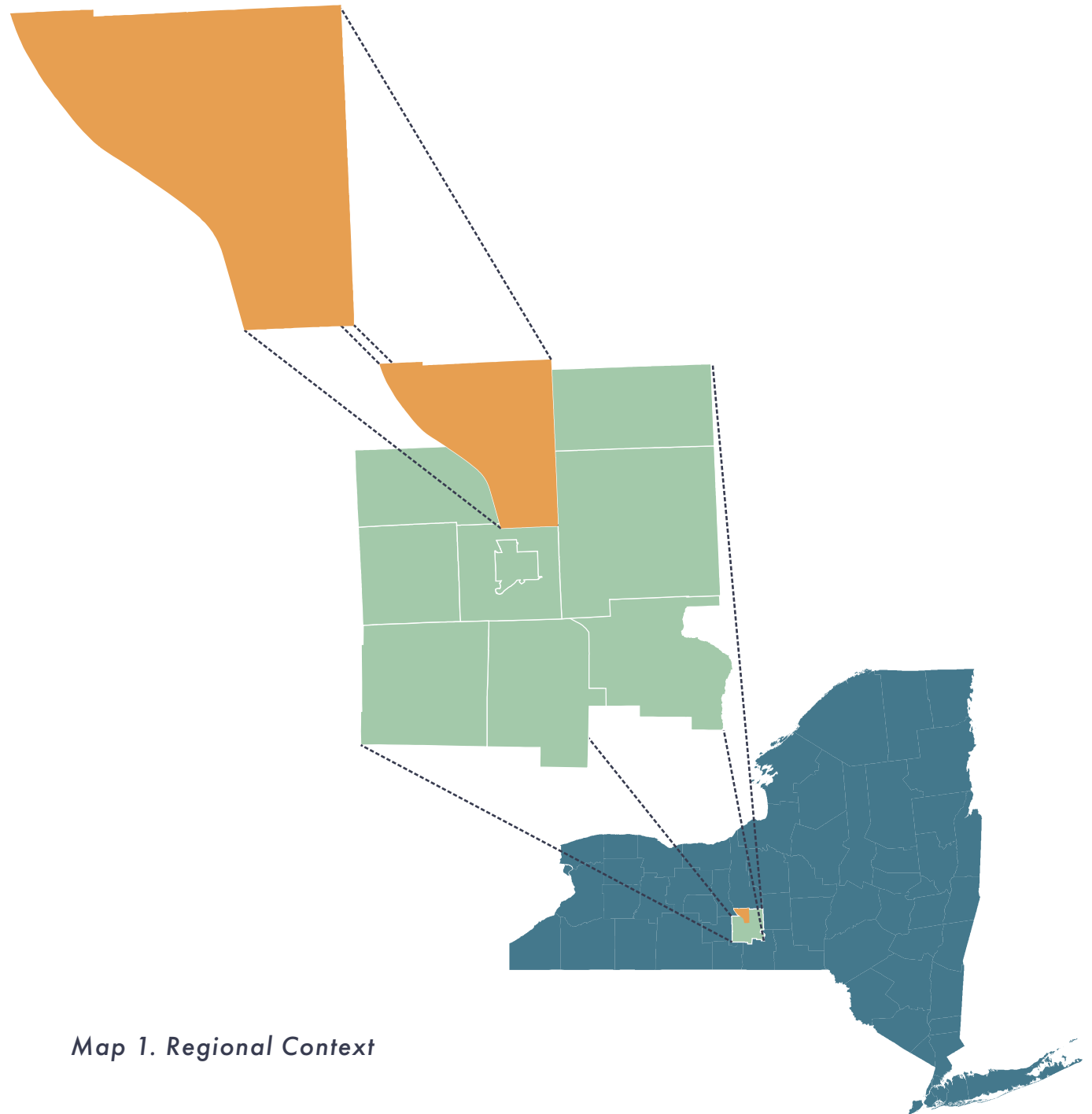
The culmination of existing analyses performed for the NRI and SRI with the additional analysis performed for the purposes of this Plan will result in a rich understanding of where open spaces currently exist in the Town and creates a foundation for prioritization of conservation efforts in the Town in the future.

## Regional Context

The Town of Lansing is located in Tompkins County, New York. The Town is located on the shores of Cayuga Lake, which makes up the entire western border of the Town. The Town is also bordered by the Town of Ithaca to the south, the Towns of Groton and Dryden to the east, and the Town of Genoa in Cayuga County to the north.

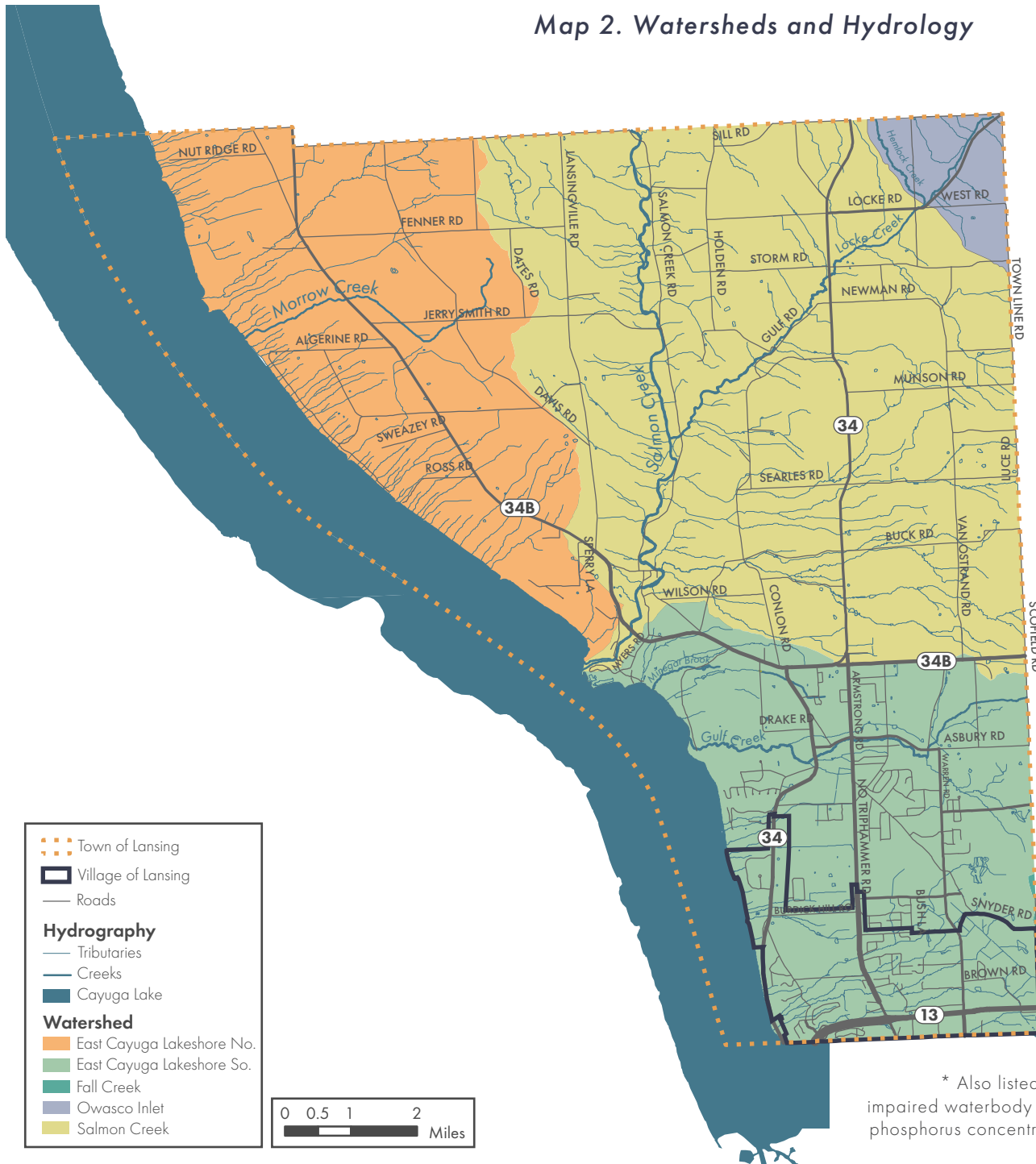
## Local Setting

The Town of Lansing is a rural Town, with a rich history of farming. Salmon Creek flows through the middle of the Town, emptying into Cayuga Lake and creating dramatic landscapes and gorges along its path. The Town grew rapidly in the mid- to late-20th Century - doubling population between 1970 and 2000. The Town currently is home to 11,565 residents according to the 2020 Census, and has the highest median income of all the Towns and Cities in Tompkins County (2021 American Community Survey).



**Map 1. Regional Context**

## Map 2. Watersheds and Hydrology



## Watersheds

The Town of Lansing, and the majority of Tompkins County is in the Southeastern Lake Ontario Watershed. Within the greater watershed, there are four significant sub-watersheds within the Town - and the Fall Creek sub-watershed touches the eastern border. Table 1 shows the acreage of each watershed in Lansing:

Subwatershed	Acres (#)	Acres (%)
East Cayuga Lakeshore (No)	9,217	20.4%
East Cayuga Lakeshore (So)	13,095	28.9%
Owasco Inlet	1,043	2.3%
Salmon Creek	21,881	48.4%
Total	45,236	100%

Table 1: Watersheds

## Hydrology

The most significant waterbody in the Town is Cayuga Lake. Salmon Creek and Gulf Creek are two of the Lake's tributaries. Each of these waterbodies are assigned a letter rating associated with water quality by the DEC, from "AA" to "D". As shown in Table 2, Salmon Creek and Gulf Creek have a rating of "C," meaning they are not appropriate for drinking water, but are well suited for trout spawning and fishing.

Waterbody	Classification
Cayuga Lake	A/AA*
Salmon Creek	C
Gulf Creek	C

Table 2: Waterbody Classification

\* Also listed as an impaired waterbody due to phosphorus concentrations.



# Wetlands

There are many wetlands in Lansing, particularly within the northwest and southeast parts of the Town. Map 3 depicts NYSDEC regulated wetlands, the National Wetlands Inventory, and Tompkins County wetlands data derived from aerial photographs in 2012. According to the Tompkins County wetlands data derived from aerial photographs in 2012, there are six types of wetlands in Lansing: aquatic bed, emergent, forested, scrub- shrub, unconsolidated bottom, and unconsolidated shore. Fifty- four percent of the total wetlands in Lansing are forested. Table 3 shows the acreage of wetlands from each of data source:

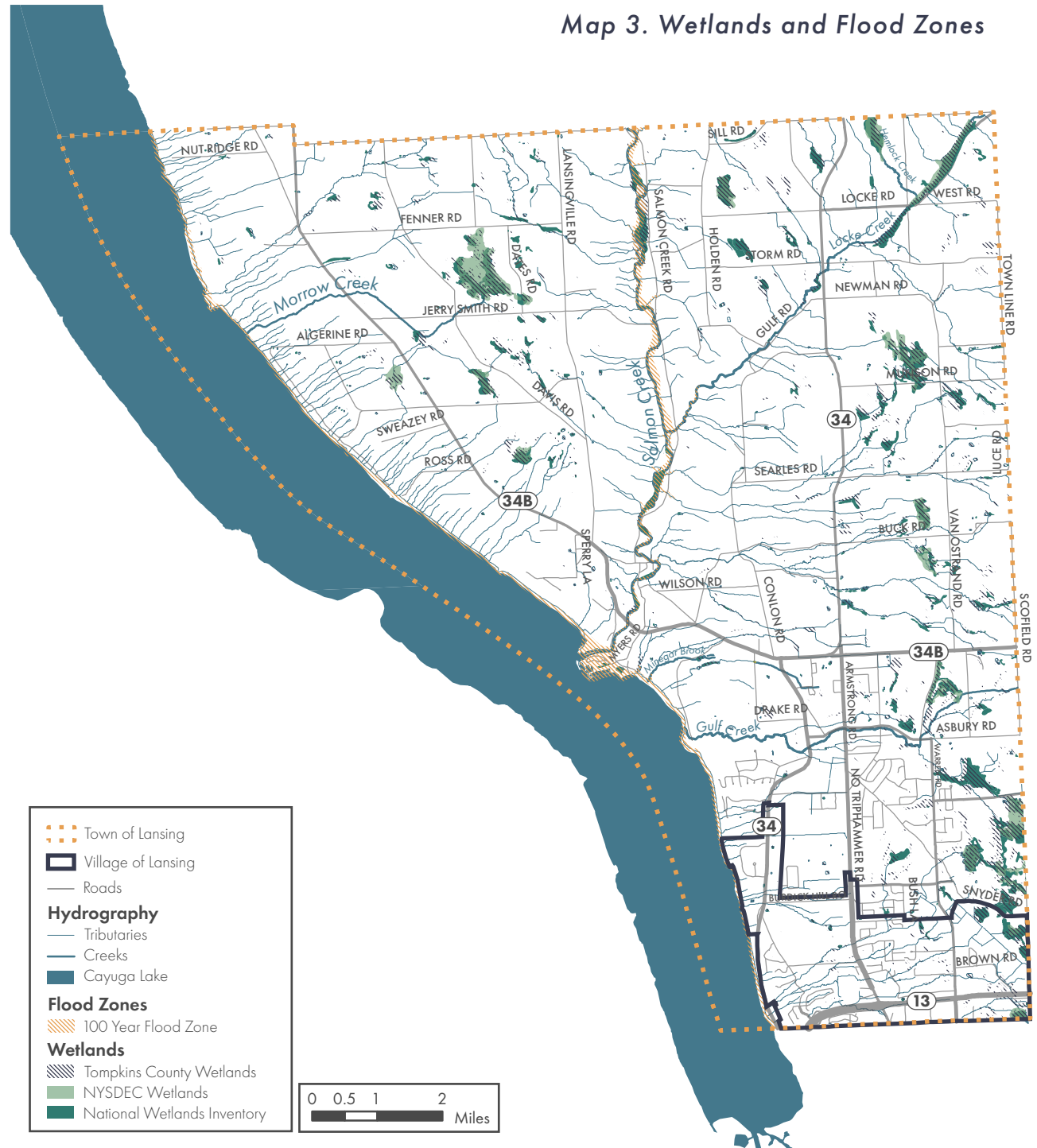
Data Source	Acres (#)
Tompkins County	1,502
National Wetlands Inventory	1,410
NYSDEC	615

Table 3: Wetlands

# Flood Zones

The 100 year flood zones, or areas with a 1% chance of flooding annually, within Lansing are generally along the shores of Cayuga Lake and along Salmon Creek. Recent years have shown that such flooding events are occurring on a more frequent basis, increasing the risk of flood damage to development in these areas, and thus increasing the need for additional protection.

Map 3. Wetlands and Flood Zones



Map 4. Steep Slopes



## Slope

Map 4 depicts the percent slope throughout Lansing. Given the Town’s location along Cayuga Lake, there are dramatic shifts in elevation at the lakeshore on the western border, which continues to rise as you move eastward from the lake, beyond the Town’s eastern boundary. Additionally, there are steep slopes throughout the Town at the edges of the many gorges that feed into the Lake - particularly along Salmon Creek, as shown on Map 4.

In contrast to the steep slopes found along the lakeshore and gorge edges, there is also a significant amount of low-slope areas, primarily used for agricultural uses, particularly in the northern areas of Town. Many of the low-slope areas in the southern portions of Town and the Village of Lansing have been developed as residential areas.

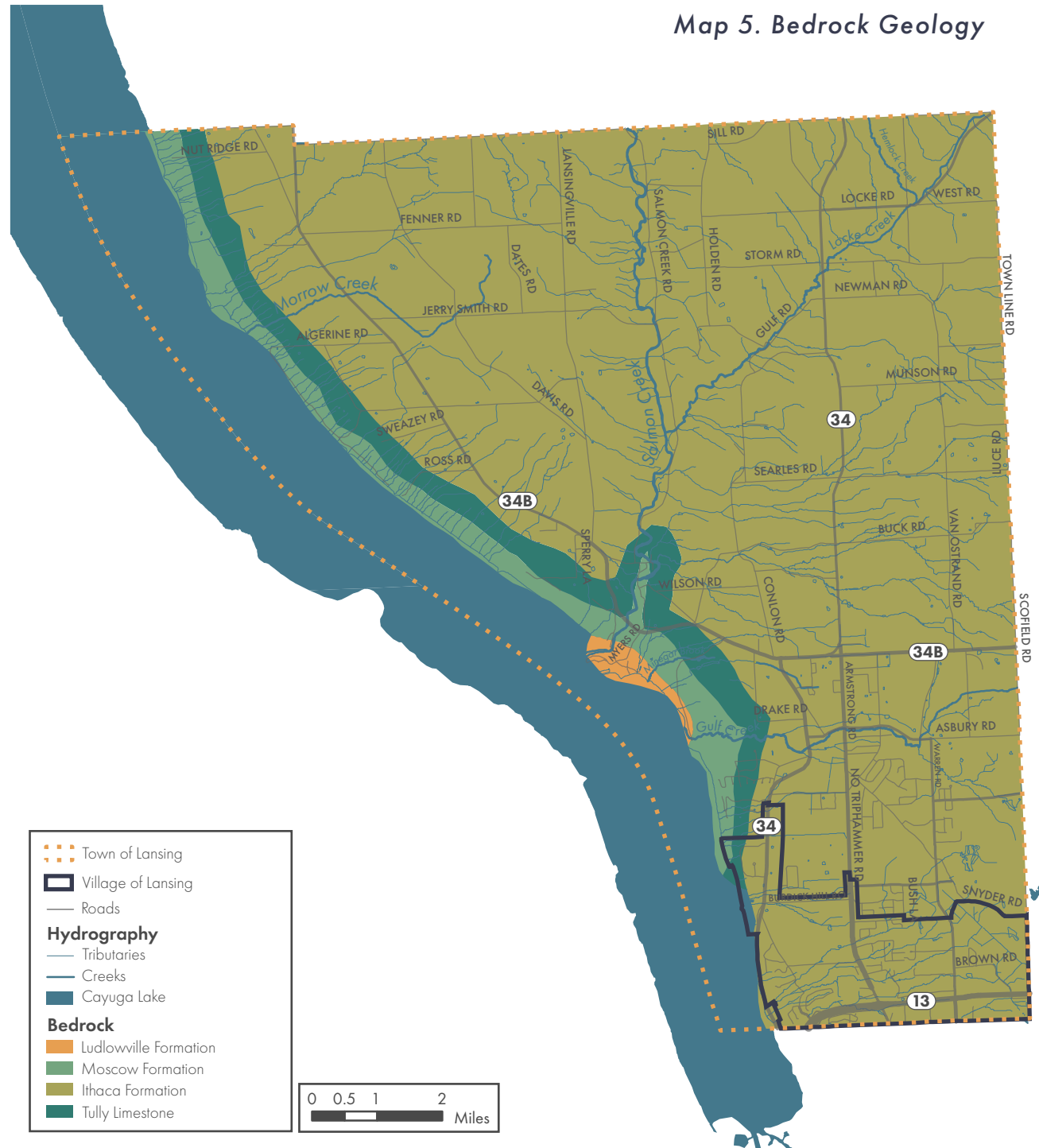
# Bedrock Geology

Map 5 depicts the bedrock geology found in Lansing. There are four types of bedrock found in Lansing, which are listed and described from oldest to youngest below\*:

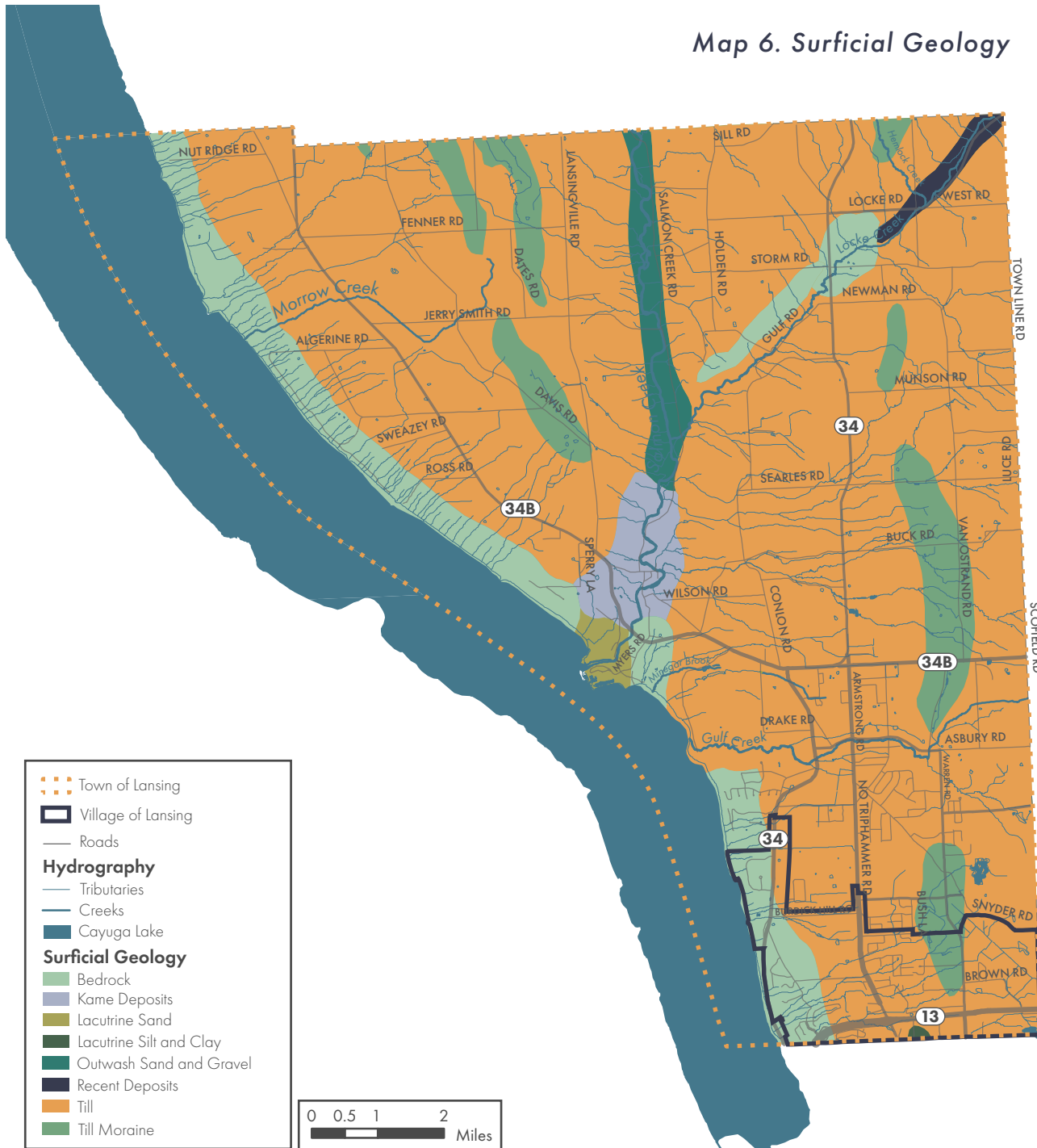
- **Ludlowville Formation.** This grouping of shales and limestones also runs along Cayuga Lake and juts out into the lake below the Moscow Formation near Salmon Creek. This formation makes about 0.2% of Town of Lansing's bedrock.
- **Moscow Formation.** These shales and limestones, located between 600 and 1500 feet in elevation, are found mostly along Cayuga Lake and make up about 1.3% of the total bedrock.
- **Ithaca Formation.** This grouping of limestones, shales, and siltstones is the most common bedrock in Town of Lansing and makes up over 96.9% of the total land area.
- **Tully Limestone.** These limestones, shales, and siltstones are found at 400 to 1000 feet. This grouping occupies about 1.6% of Town of Lansing, and is often found near Cayuga Lake.

\*Descriptions are excerpted from the 2021 Lansing Natural Resource Inventory.

Map 5. Bedrock Geology



Map 6. Surficial Geology



## Surficial Geology

Map 6 depicts each of the seven types of surficial geology deposits in Lansing, which are described below\*:

- **Kame Deposits** are glacial deposits of various forms that are called kames, eskers, kame terraces, and kame deltas. They are small, irregular hills and terraces deposited by glaciers and are typically found in valleys.
- **Lacustrine Sands** are well sorted and stratified sand deposits that settled out when lakes were formed by the melting glaciers.
- **Lacustrine Silts and Clay** are deposited in lakes formed during the melting of the glaciers. They are high in calcite, have low permeability, and form potentially unstable land.
- **Outwash Sand and Gravel** is restricted to valley bottoms and stream terraces.
- **Recent Deposits** range from fine sands to gravels and are generally confined to floodplains within a valley. They may be subject to frequent flooding and in larger valleys may be overlain by silt.
- **Till Deposits** are poorly sorted material of variable texture such as clay, silt-clay, or boulder clay that were deposited beneath glacial ice.
- **Till Moraine** is much like till, but has a more variable sorting, and is generally more permeable than till. Deposits of till moraine were typically set down adjacent to glacial ice.

\*Descriptions are excerpted from the 2021 Lansing Natural Resource Inventory.

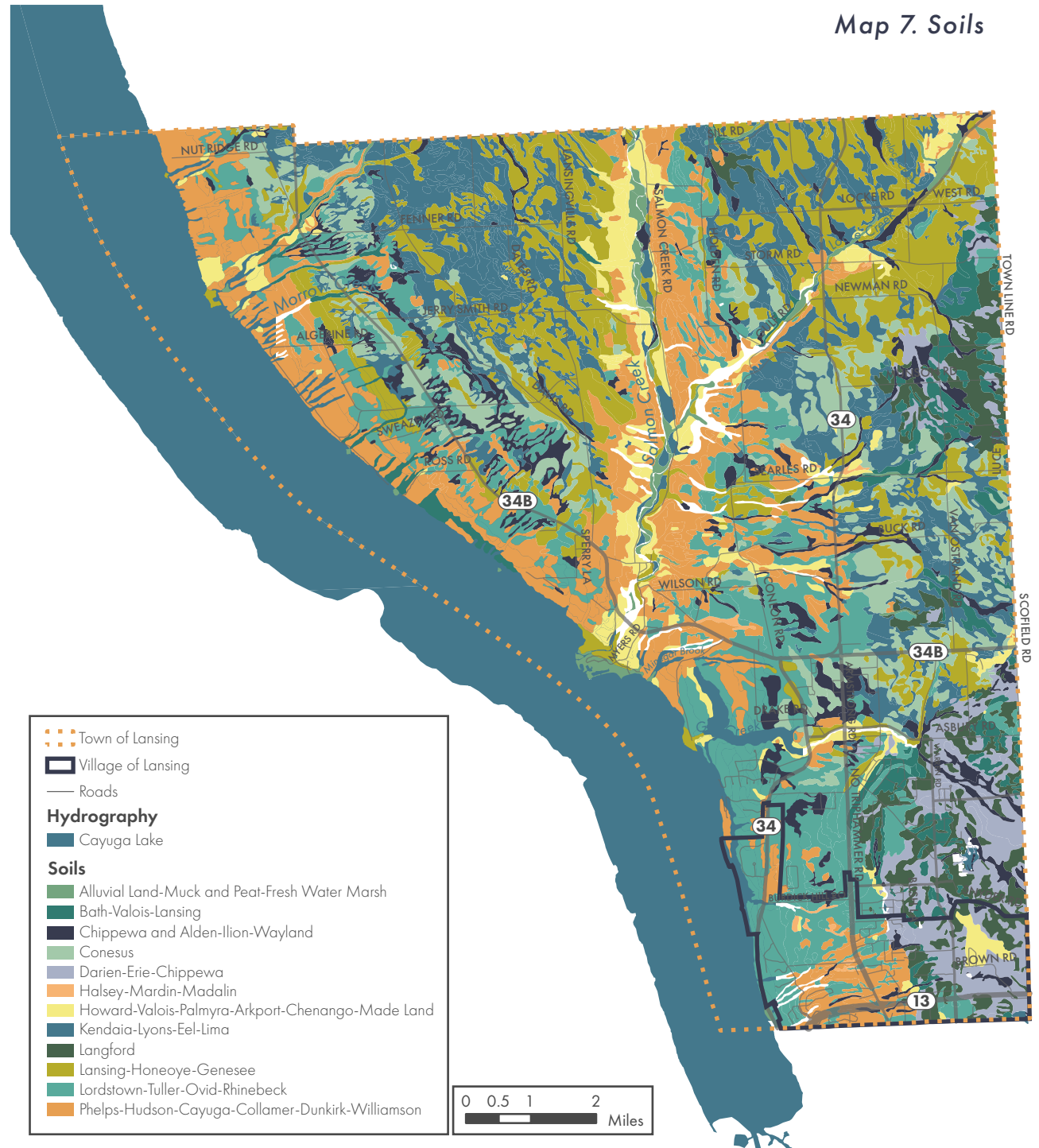
# Soils

There are twelve types of soils found in Lansing. Map 7 depicts the spatial distribution of these soils throughout the Town, and Table 4 below shows the percentage of land coverage for each soil type:

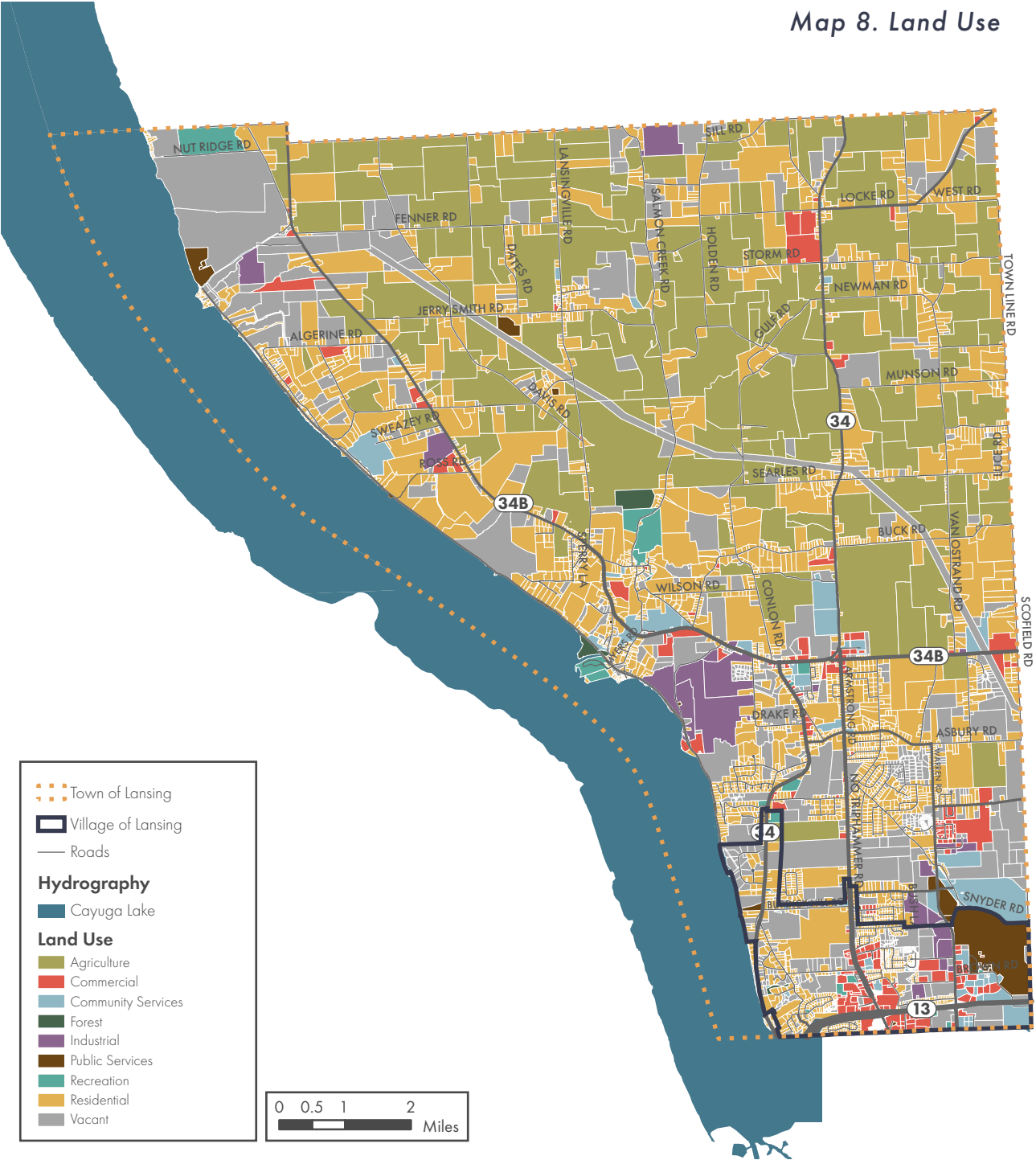
Soil Type	Land Coverage (%)
Alluvial Land-Muck and Peat- Fresh Water Marsh	1.12%
Bath- Valois- Lansing	4.30%
Chippewa and Alden-Ilion-Wayland	4.94%
Conesus	6.77%
Darien-Erie-Chippewa	2.78%
Halsey-Mardin-Madalin	0.15%
Howard-Valois-Palmyra-Arkport-Chenango-Made Land	4.10%
Kendaia-Lyons-Eel-Lima	13.43%
Langford	3.78%
Lansing-Honeoye-Genesee	13.89%
Lordstown-Tuller-Ovid-Rhinebeck	13.81%
Phelps-Hudson-Cayuga-Collamer-Dunkirk-Williamson	13.77%

Table 4: Soil Types

Map 7. Soils



Map 8. Land Use



# Land Use

Map 8 depicts the existing land use patterns in the Town, based on 2022 parcel data from Tompkins County. Table 5 below illustrates the breakdown of land uses in the Town by percentage of both land coverage and parcels:

Land Use	% of Land Coverage	% of Parcels
Agriculture	37.3%	3.0%
Commercial	3.0%	4.7%
Community Services	2.4%	1.6%
Forest	0.2%	0.1%
Industrial	2.3%	0.5%
Public Services	1.6%	0.6%
Recreation	1.0%	0.5%
Residential	32.3%	69.9%
Vacant	20.0%	19.1%

Table 5: Land Use

The majority of land coverage in the Town is Agricultural, followed closely by Residential. The third most prevalent land use category by land coverage is vacant land. By percentage of total parcels, Residential makes up the majority of parcels, whereas Agricultural parcels only represent 3% of total parcels -- reflecting the large amount of acreage required for full-scale farming operations.

\*Descriptions are excerpted from the 2021 Lansing Natural Resource Inventory.

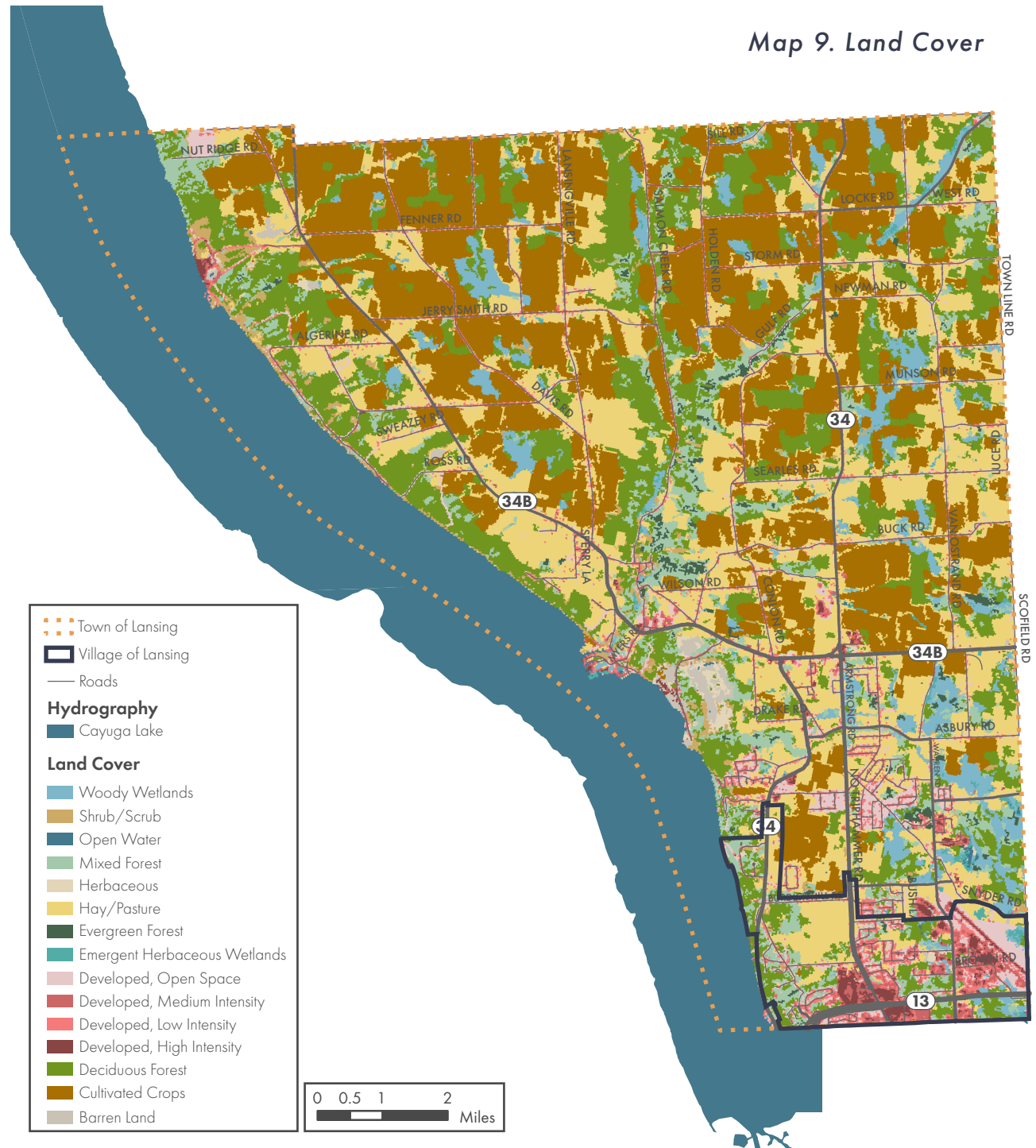
# Land Cover

There are fifteen types of land cover present in Lansing, according to the 2019 National Land Cover Database. As shown on Map 9, a large portion of the Town's land area is dedicated to cultivated crops, which aligns with parcel data analysis provided on the previous page, showing that agriculture is the largest land use by land coverage. In addition to cultivated crops, hay/pasture also makes up a significant portion of the Town.

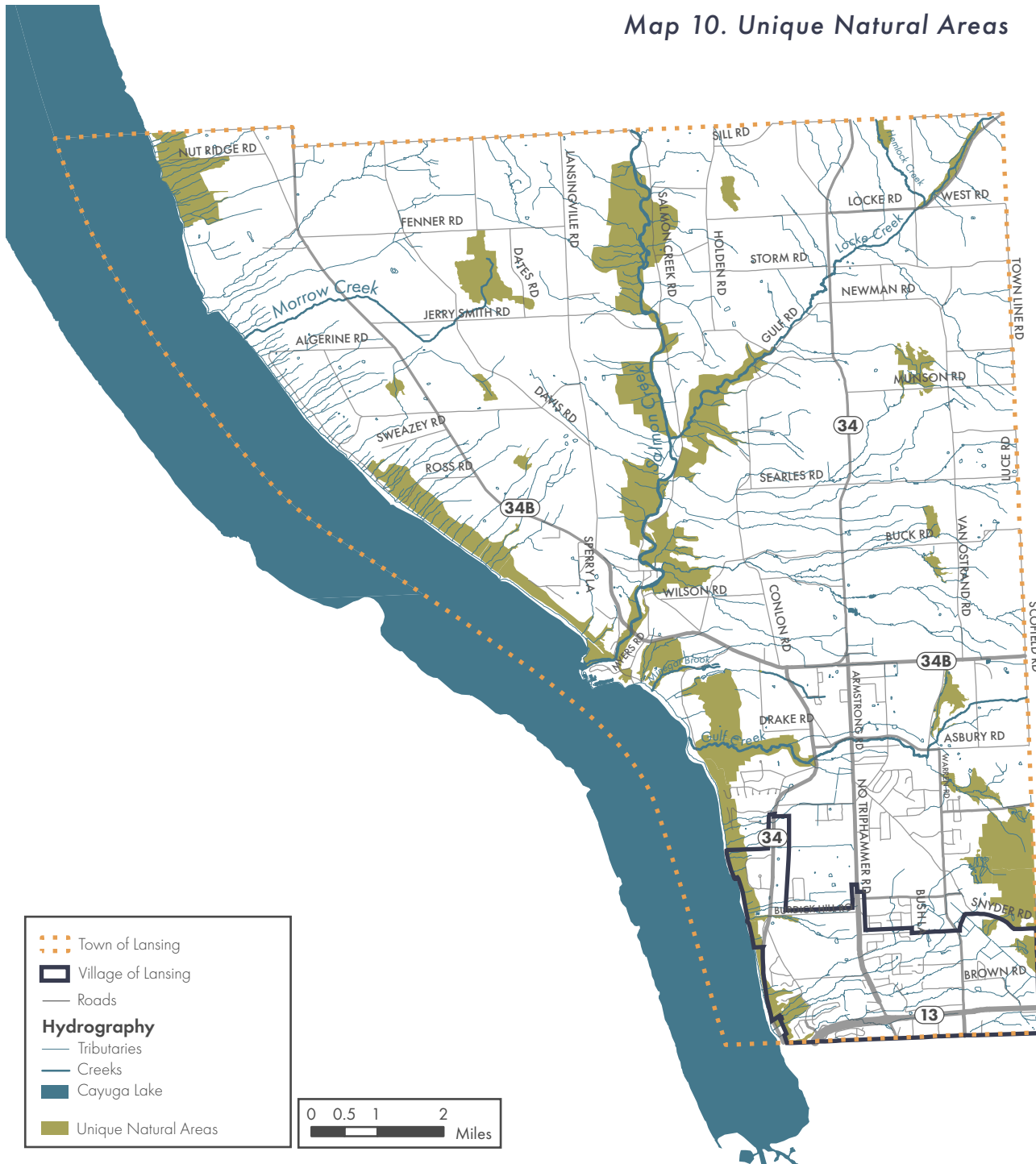
There are large swaths of deciduous forest, specifically along the Salmon Creek corridor and the Cayuga Lake shoreline. The woody wetlands identified on Map 9 align with the DEC, NWI, and County delineated wetlands presented on page 14.

Developed areas, ranging from low to high intensity are largely found at the southern edge of the Town and within the Village of Lansing. There are also concentrations of development along the Town's major roadways as well. The concentration of barren land off of Portland Point Road are quarries owned by Cargill, Inc., and Cayuga Crushed Stone.

Map 9. Land Cover



Map 10. Unique Natural Areas



## Unique Natural Areas

The Tompkins County Environmental Management Council maintains an inventory of Unique Natural Areas (UNAs) that have “outstanding environmental qualities,” and “are deserving of special attention for preservation and protection.” Each UNA must possess one of the following five characteristics:

- Important natural community such as wetland, historical characteristics, old-growth forest, diverse flora or fauna, etc.
- Quality of example of an ecosystem or plant/animal community.
- Rare or scarce plants or animals
- Rare or outstanding example of geological features or processes
- Outstanding natural or scenic beauty, recreational value, urban greenspace, or cultural/historical/archaeological significance.

As shown on Map 10, a large swath of the Cayuga Lakeshore is designated as a UNA, as well as many of the woodlands along the Salmon Creek, Locke Creek corridors. The wetlands north of the Ithaca-Tompkins Regional Airport are also designated as a UNA, as well as the wetlands north of Jerry Smith Road.

Bell Station, the property recently acquired by the Finger Lakes Land Trust, is also designated as a UNA.

\* Descriptions are excerpted from the 2021 Lansing Natural Resource Inventory.

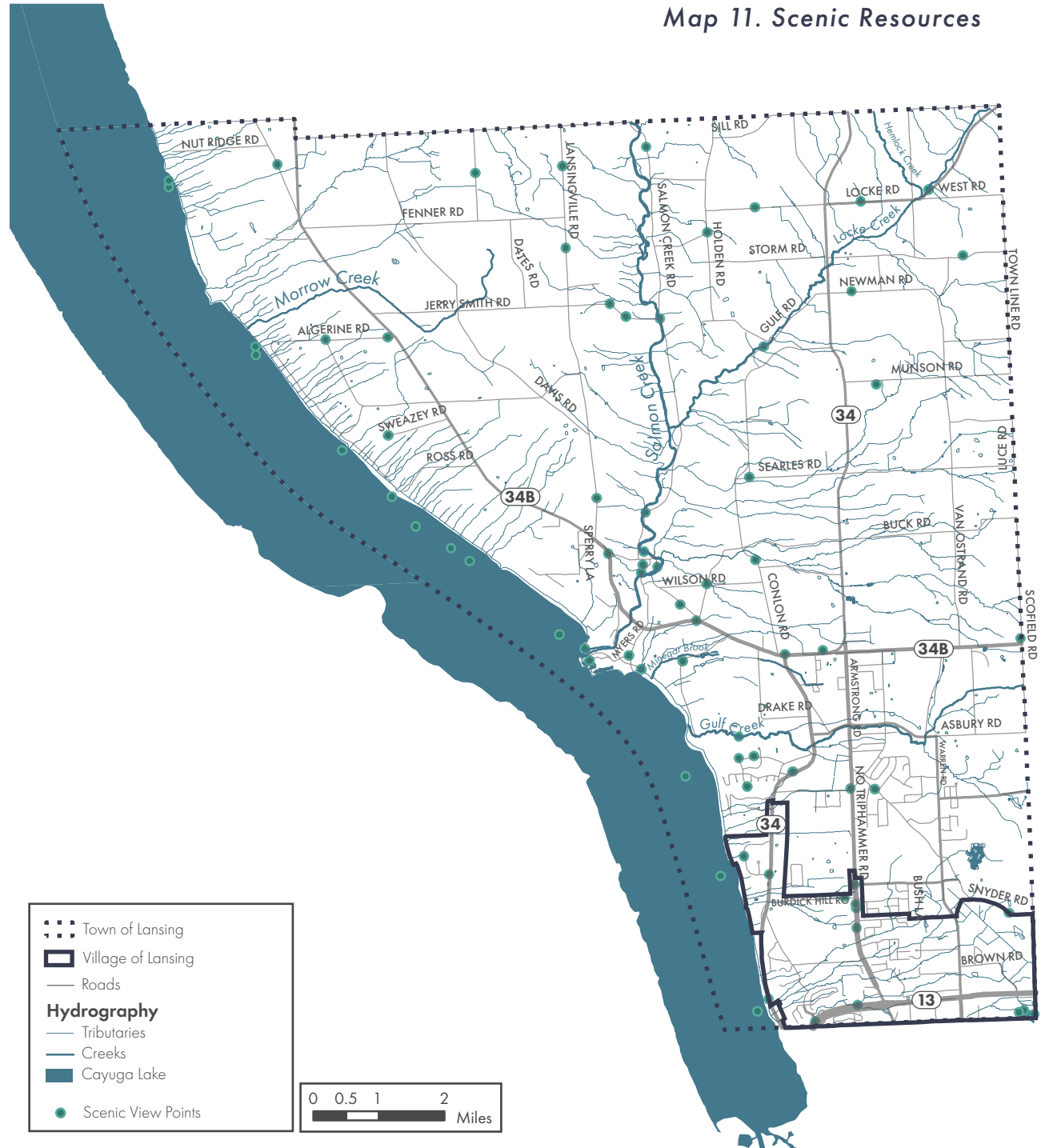


# Scenic Resources

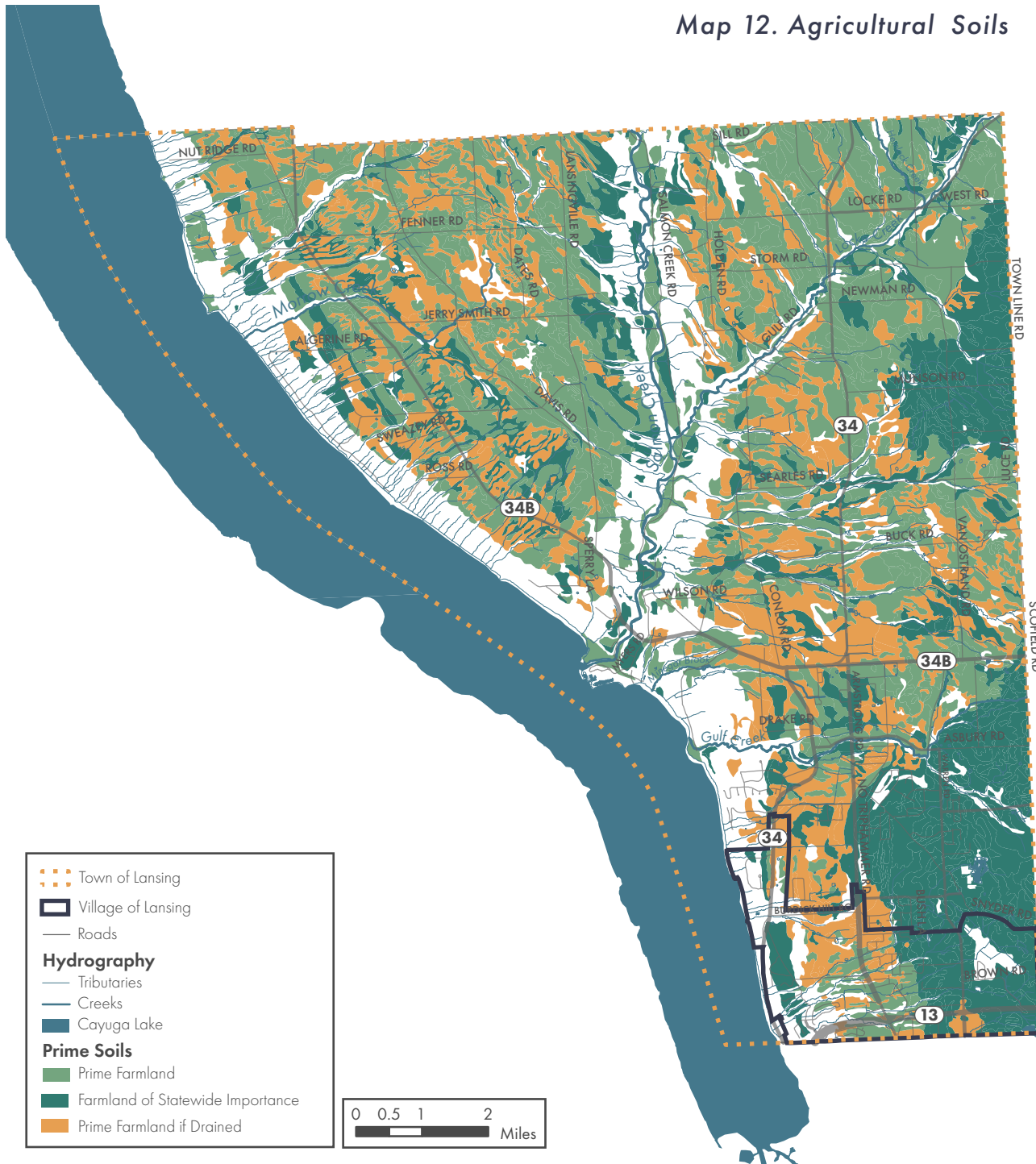
Lansing has identified 42 scenic resources within the Town as a part of the 2021 Scenic Resources Inventory (SRI). According to the SRI, "Twenty locations were classified as Distinctive; distinctive views make a clear, unmistakable impression, and are distinguished as some of the best scenic views in Tompkins County. Examples include cliffs, gorges, waterfalls, and other more expansive views. Twenty two locations were classified as Noteworthy; noteworthy views are worthy of attracting attention, and are better than many of the scenic views in the Town of Lansing ( e.g., vistas, distant hillsides, lake views, ponds and wetlands, farm fields). Currently, the majority of these scenic resources are on privately-owned land.

Map 11 presents the scenic resources identified in the SRI. A viewshed analysis was conducted for the 20 distinctive views in the SRI. This analysis shows what land is visible from each scenic view point based on topography, vegetation conditions, and vegetation height. The analysis looked at both "leaf on" and "leaf off" conditions, meaning viewsheds for both summer and winter conditions. For the results of each viewshed analysis, and more detail and photos for each location analyzed, please refer to the 2021 Scenic Resources Inventory.

Map 11. Scenic Resources



Map 12. Agricultural Soils



## Agricultural Districts

A large portion of the Town is within Tompkins County Agricultural District 1 - 25,619 acres in total, or approximately 62% of the total land cover in the Town. The purpose of Agriculture Districts is to promote and sustain agricultural use of lands within New York State. The program provides protection to property owners and tax incentives to maintain property in agricultural uses. The Districts are reviewed by the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County every eight years.

## Agricultural Soils

As shown on Map 12, a majority of the land area in Lansing possesses prime agricultural soils. These soils are categorized by the National Cooperative Soil Survey in three categories:

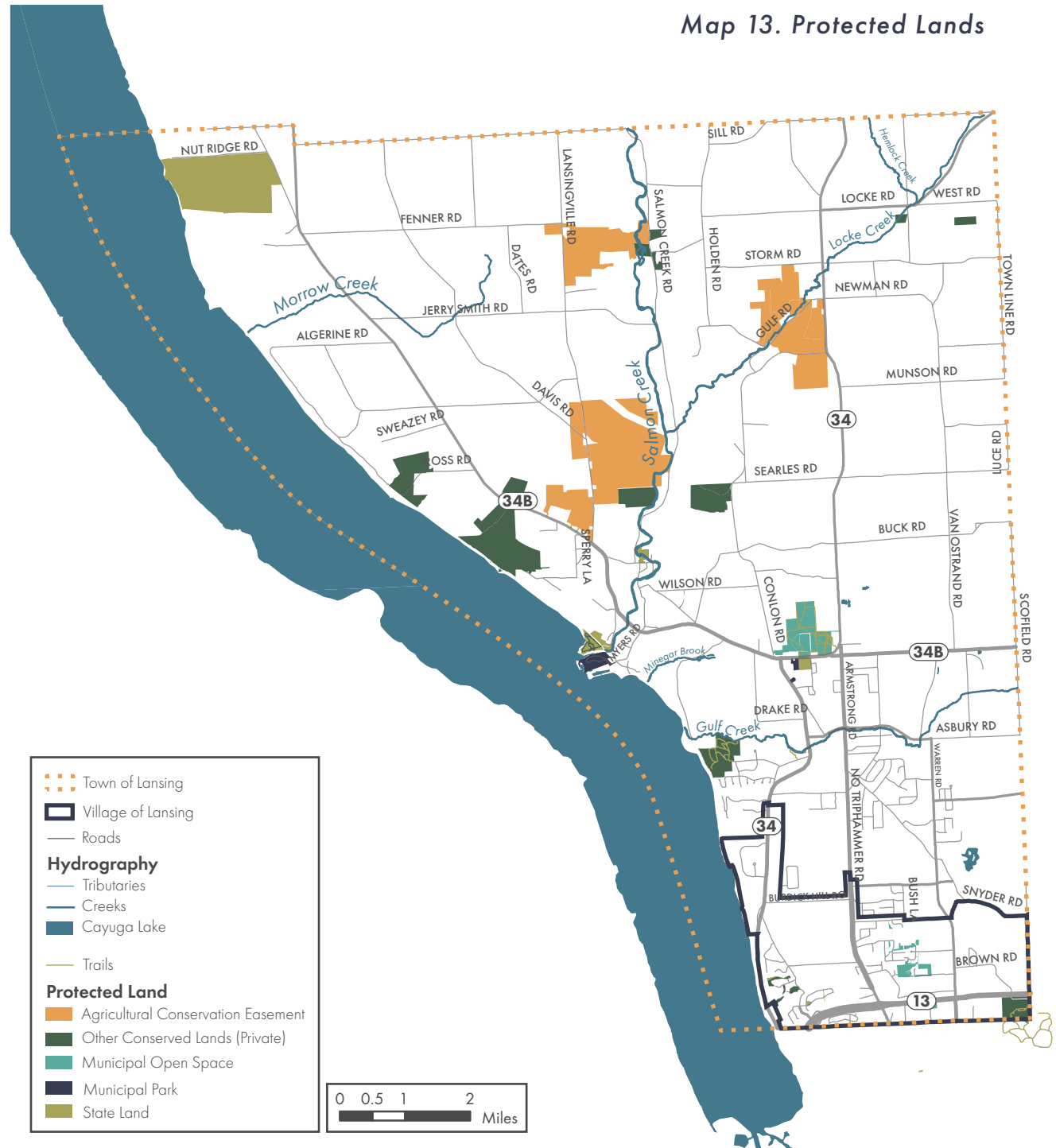
- **Prime Farmland.** Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and that is available for these uses.
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance.** Soils that do not meet all the criteria for Prime Farmland or Prime Farmland if Drained, but are mineral soils in land capability classes 2e, 2s, 2w, 3e, 3s, 3w, or 4w.
- **Prime Farmland if Drained.** Soils that meet all the prime farmland criteria except for depth to seasonal high water table, and are suitable for drainage.

# Protected Lands, Parks, + Trails

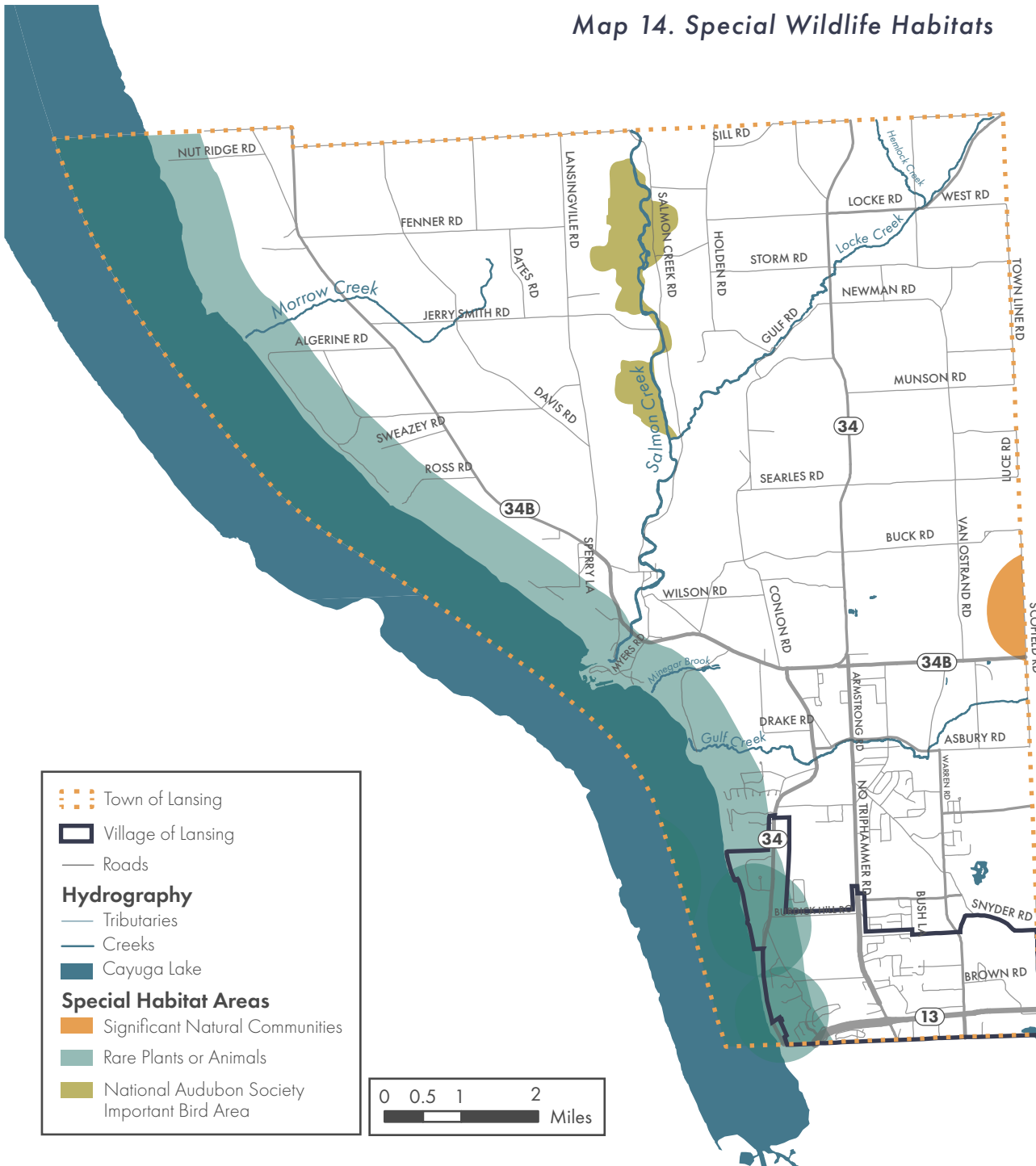
The Tompkins County Planning Department has identified existing protected properties in the Town of Lansing, which are shown on Map 13. The categories include agricultural conservation easements, other privately owned conserved land, municipal open space, municipal parks, and state lands. Throughout the Town, this culminates in approximately 2,800 acres of protected lands and parks, or approximately 7% of the total acreage within Lansing.

Most of the existing parks and trails in Lansing are in the central area of Town. In addition, the Finger Lakes Land Trust recently acquired the Bell Station Property in the northwest corner of Town, which is anticipated to be transferred to NYSDEC to be managed as a recreational open space. For more information on Lansing’s parks and trails, please refer to the Town’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Map 13. Protected Lands



Map 14. Special Wildlife Habitats



## Special Wildlife Habitats

The New York State Natural Heritage Program maintains a database of locations of rare animals and plants, including:

- All animals and plants listed by NYS as Endangered or Threatened
- Some animals listed by NYS as Special Concern
- Some plants listed by NYS as Rare
- Some species not officially listed by NYS, but which are rare in New York.

The precise locations of these species is not publicly available in order to protect these plants and animals. However, the generalized areas of these species are presented, which can be seen on Map 14. The area that generally flanks the shoreline of Cayuga Lake in Lansing is identified as within the vicinity of Lake Sturgeon. The two smaller areas identified along the lakeshore within the Village of Lansing are in the vicinity to rare, threatened, or endangered plant species.

There is also a generalized area on the eastern edge of Town that is identified as a significant natural community. This area is within the vicinity of Wyckoff Swamp, which is a rich hemlock-hardwood peat swamp. The National Heritage program deemed this area to be a high quality occurrence of a rare community type in New York State. This swamp provides important habitat for a large diversity of birds and other unique plants and animals.

In addition the National Audubon Society has designated a portion of the Salmon Creek corridor as a statewide important bird area.

# Zoning

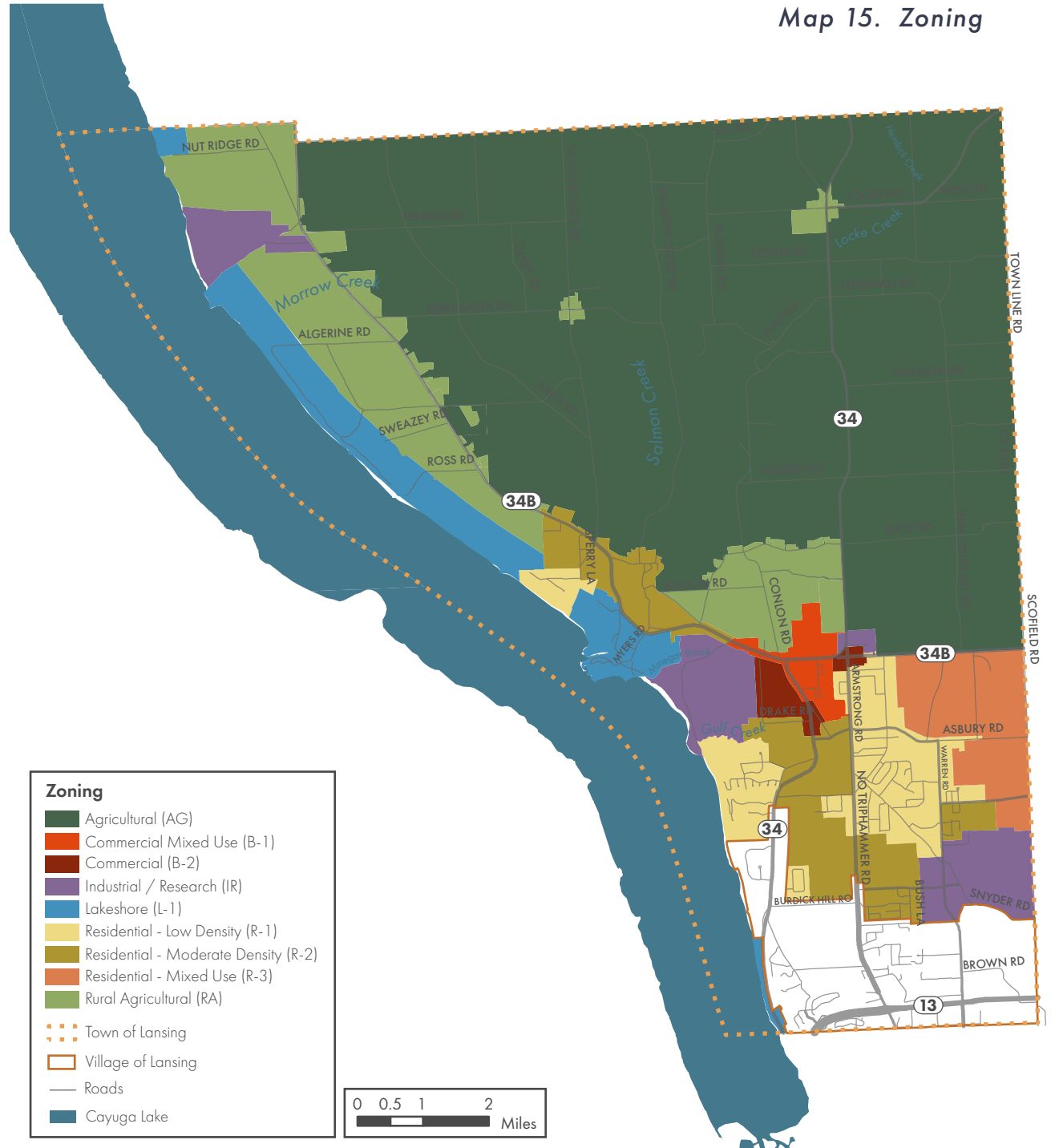
There are nine existing zoning districts in the Town of Lansing - two agricultural districts, two commercial districts, three residential districts, a lakeshore district, and an industrial district.

In 2023, the Town amended the zoning code and map to include the Agricultural (AG) District, which is intended to preserve agriculture and agricultural-related businesses in the northeast area of the Town. This district makes up the majority of the Town by land area, and the Rural Agricultural (RA) District is intended to buffer the AG District from more intensive adjacent non-farming uses with limited residential development.

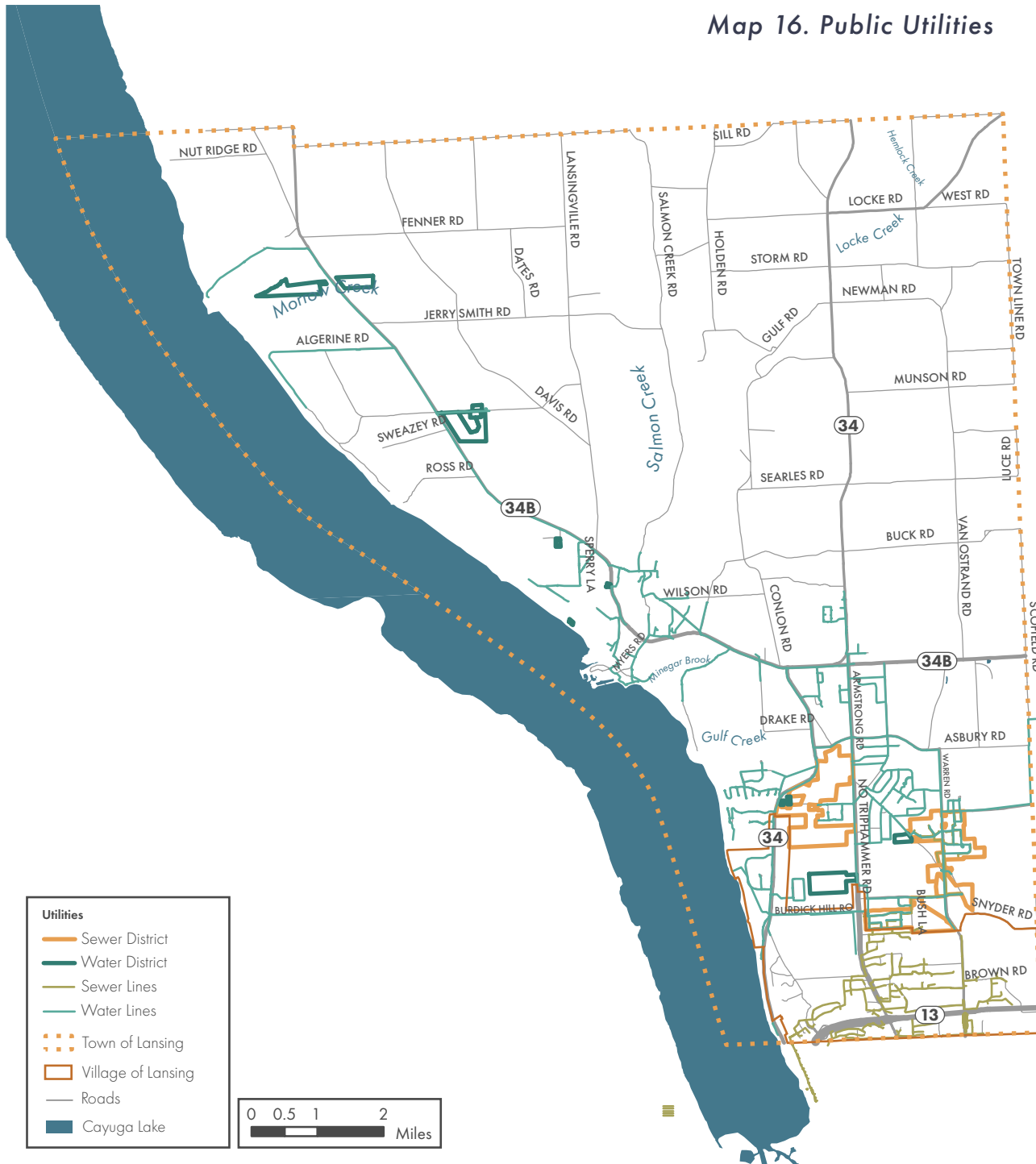
The two commercial districts are designated within a limited area of the Town, generally surrounding the intersection of Routes 34 and 34B. The industrially zoned areas of Town are the former Miliken Station, Cargill Salt Mine, and the area north of the Ithaca Tompkins County International Airport.

The remaining districts primarily promote residential development, and are generally concentrated along the northern edge of the Village of Lansing where public utilities are available.

Map 15. Zoning



Map 16. Public Utilities



## Public Utilities

Public utilities, including sewer and water service, are generally concentrated in the southern portion of Lansing. Water service is more widely available compared to sewer. Most of the area south of, as well as along the entirety of Route 34B has access to public water. Sewer service is much more limited, and is generally only available directly adjacent to the Village of Lansing.



Photo: Survey Taker

## VISION + GOALS

This section sets forth a comprehensive vision for the Town of Lansing's open spaces. The vision statement intended to be a concise declaration of what the Town of Lansing believes in and what the community envisions for the future. Six goals are also outlined that identify that different outcomes of open space conservation that the Town wants to achieve, and that ultimately work towards achieving the overall community open space vision.

# Open Space Vision

The vision is intended to be ambitious as well as illustrative of what the future the Town of Lansing can achieve through the implementation of this Plan. It will also provide help to guide decision-making about future development, investment, and conservation in the Town.

The vision is concentrated on space conservation efforts in the Town, and is intended to complement, not replace, the overarching vision established in the Comprehensive Plan.

Conservation efforts must be balanced with, and considered under the context of thoughtful development.

Both open spaces and appropriate residential and commercial development are necessary in order to maintain and enhance the Town's quality of life and attractiveness for residents and stakeholders well into the future.

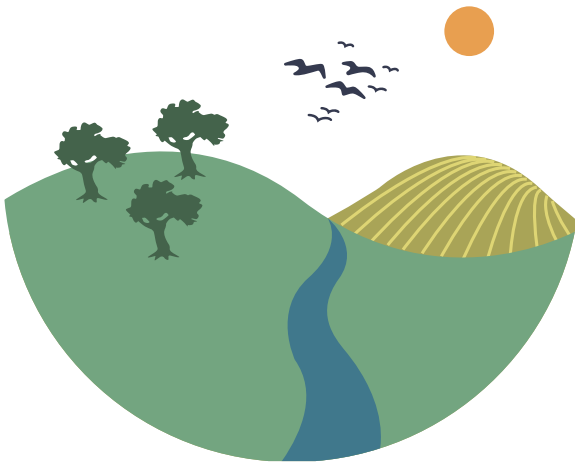
**Vast open spaces, scenic vistas, and an abundance of natural resources are the defining features of the Town of Lansing, and are invaluable assets to the community's residents and leaders. As such, Lansing will protect and celebrate its open spaces and natural resources to maintain its identity and preserve the rich quality of life that they afford the Town's residents. The Town will prioritize conservation efforts, and will develop and maintain strong partnerships with local agencies, organizations, and the farming community to accomplish its goals while supporting their efforts. This will require thoughtful planning and strategic actions to ensure that this vision and the community's goals are realized. These efforts will allow for enhanced community access and recreation, uplift local property values, and ensure the protection of crucial environmental resources that will enhance the Town's resiliency and sustainability for years to come.**



Photo: Caroline Rasmussen, Town Resident



# Project Goals



Maintain the agrarian heritage of the Town and preserve its scenic beauty.



Preserve agriculture as a viable economic sector in Lansing.



Build local resiliency to climate change impacts.



Enhance resident  
quality of life  
through scenic and  
recreational resources.



Protect our local  
ecosystem and  
support wildlife  
habitat.



Ensure the long term  
sustainability of our  
water, air, and land  
resources.

# Development and Open Space Conservation: A Balancing Act



Open space conservation efforts must be balanced with a strategic plan for thoughtful development, allowing for both economic growth and environmental sustainability - both of which are necessary for a prosperous future. This balancing act is something that is clearly identified within the ten basic principles of smart growth identified by the Smart Growth Network, a partnership of government, business, and civic organizations headed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

**Principle 1: Mix land uses**

**Principle 2: Take advantage of compact design**

**Principle 3: Create a range of housing opportunities and choices**

**Principle 4: Create walkable neighborhoods**

**Principle 5: Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place**

**Principle 6: Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, & critical environmental areas**

**Principle 7: Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities**

**Principle 8: Provide a variety of transportation choices**

**Principle 9: Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective**

**Principle 10: Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions**

These principles recognize the need for open space conservation as it pertains to environmental sustainability and community character, while supporting necessary housing, services, and local businesses. Furthermore, retaining open spaces in the community can help make the Town more attractive for residents and employers, fostering a sustainable economic development strategy. This Plan is intended to be utilized as a tool as development applications are processed by the Town and its various boards to help recognize and respect this balance.

*Photo: Town Resident*



# OPEN SPACE INDEX

The purpose of the Open Space Index (OSI) is to inventory and prioritize land across the Town of Lansing regarding its open space value. This section outlines the process and methodology of creating the OSI, and displays the results of the prioritization process. The OSI will assist the Town's various boards and committees in reviewing development applications as well as when considering open space conservation actions or investments.

# Open Space Index

## Purpose

The first step in conducting the Open Space Index (OSI) was for the project team to identify the key parcels to be conserved. The rating system enables the Town to be strategic in its allocation of funds and efforts by providing a tool to both proactively identify parcels and resources that meet the goals of the open space program; and to analyze the merits of individual projects and opportunities as they present themselves.

It must be noted that the criteria for a parcel rating system are unique to an individual community and to the community's priorities and goals with respect to its open space resources. The following system is a starting point for Lansing. As individual projects and opportunities arise, more detailed site-specific analyses may be required to further refine the evaluation and protection of resources.



Photo: Bill Hecht

Map 17. Parcels of at least 70 acres

### Parcel Identification

The first phase of the OSI involved the project team identifying target parcels that would be evaluated for their value in Lansing’s open space network. For the purposes of this Plan, the team only evaluated parcels that were at least 70 acres in size. The evaluation included all parcels within this size threshold, regardless of existing land use, which resulted in a total of 119 parcels analyzed. Map 17 shows the parcels analyzed, and the breakdown of properties analyzed by land use is as follows:

- 75 Agricultural Parcels
- 18 Residential Parcels
- 16 Vacant Parcels
- 4 Industrial Parcels
- 3 Community Services Parcels
- 2 Commercial Parcels
- 2 Recreation Parcels
- 1 Public Service Parcel



## Ranking Criteria

In order to determine the relative value of each open space parcel identified, and apply consistent criteria for evaluating each parcel, the project team developed a list of ranking criteria to evaluate each parcel's importance in preserving the Town's character. The team developed the list of evaluation criteria used based on Question 6 in the Community Survey, but further refined it to include additional attributes of the landscape that were deemed essential to include through discussions of the CAC. This resulted in eleven ranking categories, including:

- Agriculture + Farmlands
- Forest + Woodlots
- Wetlands
- Floodplains
- Stream Corridors
- Cayuga Lakefront
- Significant Wildlife Habitat
- Grasslands + Meadows
- Steep Slopes
- Unique Natural Areas
- Susceptibility to Development

Acknowledging that some of these categories should be weighed more heavily than others when evaluating the value of a specific parcel in terms of open space value, the team established "weighting factors" to apply the appropriate importance to each category. The team considered each category and compared it to every other category. For each comparison, the category that was determined to be more important to Lansing received a point. The total frequency that an attribute was determined to be more important than another category resulted in the total weighting value for that category.

The graphic on the next page depicts the results of this comparative ranking exercise. A larger value indicates that the category is more important to Lansing. For example, the category "Susceptibility to Development" has a value of 10, indicating that when compared to each of the other 10 categories, it was determined to be more important. In contrast, "Floodplains", which has a value of 1, was only determined to be more important than one other category.



## Weighting Factor Results



### KEY



## Ranking Process

Prior to establishing weighting factors for each category, the project team assigned each parcel an unweighted value between 0 and 3 for each of the 11 categories. These points were assigned based on a quantitative analysis performed using GIS, in which the team performed an overlay analysis that depicted the spatial relationship between the characteristic in question (e.g. farmlands) and the parcel. The data used for each of the categories, and how the team assigned each parcel a value is described on the following pages. The maps depicting these spatial relationships are included in the Plan Appendix.

## Agriculture + Farmlands

For the Agriculture + Farmlands category, the team used three data sets to determine the ranking of each property. The first dataset was the Tompkins County Agricultural Districts, as described on page 23 in the Inventory + Analysis section. If the parcel was located within a County Agricultural District, it received one point. The second dataset was the land use classification assigned to the parcel based on the New York State Property Tax Class Codes. If the parcel was within the “100” category, the team deemed it to be currently used for agricultural purposes, and thus the parcel received an additional point. Lastly, the team used the presence of prime agricultural soils for scoring purposes. If at least 25% of the parcel contained soils identified as Prime Soils or Soils of Statewide Importance, the parcel received an additional point. The prime soil data utilized was from the Gridded Soil Survey Geographic (gSSURGO) Database for New York. Refer to Map 8 on page 19 and Map 12 on page 23 for the geographic distribution of this data. The table below summarizes the data analyzed for this category, and the points assigned.

Data	Metric	Points Allocated
Tompkins County Agricultural Districts	Is parcel within District?	1
NYS Property Tax Class Codes	Is parcel designated as agriculture in use?	1
Gridded Soil Survey Geographic (gSSURGO) Database for New York	25% of lot contains Prime Soils and/or Soils of Statewide Importance	1

## Forest + Woodlots

For the Forest + Woodlots category, the team utilized the National Land Cover Database. According to the Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium, “The National Land Cover Database (NLCD) provides nationwide data on land cover and land cover change at a 30m resolution with a 16-class legend based on a modified Anderson Level II classification system.” The team identified three of the 16 classes as Forest - 41: Deciduous Forest, 42: Evergreen Forest, and 43: Mixed Forest. Refer to Map 9 on page 20 to see the land cover distribution across Lansing. For the purposes of this analysis, the team used the percentage of a parcel that was covered by one of these three categories to assign points to each parcel, as described in the table below:

Data	Metric	Points Allocated
National Land Cover Database: Forest Classes (41: Deciduous Forest, 42: Evergreen Forest, and 43: Mixed Forest)	0-10% of parcel covered	0
	11-40% of parcel covered	1
	41-70% of parcel covered	2
	71-100% of parcel covered	3

## Wetlands

For the Wetlands category, the team used Tompkins County 2012 Wetland Designation data. The team chose to use County data over NYSDEC Wetland or NWI data due to its more detailed analysis conducted at the local level, as opposed to a state or nationwide scale. Refer to Map 3 on page 14 to compare the County, State, and Federal designated wetlands. In regard to the assignment of points, they ranged from 0-3 points based on the total acreage of wetlands present within each parcel, as described below:

Data	Metric	Points Allocated
Tompkins County 2012 Wetland Designation	0 - 0.5 acres	0
	0.5 - 2 acres	1
	2 - 10 acres	2
	10 + acres	3

## Floodplains

For the Floodplains category, the team utilized Preliminary Flood Hazard Zone designations from FEMA, released in January 2023. Refer to Map 3 on page 14 to see the spatial distribution of Flood Hazard Zones in Lansing. Point assignment was based on the total acreage contained within each parcel that has a 1% annual chance of flooding, as shown in the table below:

Data	Metric	Points Allocated
FEMA Preliminary Flood Hazard Areas for Tompkins County	0 - 0.5 acres	0
	0.5 - 2 acres	1
	2 - 10 acres	2
	10 + acres	3

## Stream Corridors

Regarding Stream Corridors, the team used two datasets: the 100' Perennial Stream Buffers and 50' Intermittent Stream Buffers created by Tompkins County based on hydrology data for the Tompkins County Natural Resources Inventory. Refer to Map 2 on page 13 to see the hydrography of Lansing. The team assigned points based on the percentage of the parcel covered by these two datasets.

Data	Metric	Points Allocated
Tompkins County 100' Perennial Stream Buffers + 50' Intermittent Stream Buffers	0-5% of parcel covered	0
	6-10% of parcel covered	1
	10-15% of parcel covered	2
	15% + of parcel covered	3

## Cayuga Lakefront

For the Cayuga Lakefront category, the team conducted a visual analysis of the parcels alongside the Cayuga lakeshore to determine which parcels were adjacent to the lakefront. Such parcels received three points, all other parcels received no points for this category.

Data	Metric	Points Allocated
Hydrography	Not adjacent to the lakefront	0
	Adjacent to the lakefront	3

## Significant Wildlife Habitat

For the Significant Wildlife Habitat category, the team used three data sets to determine the ranking of each property. The first dataset is the NYSDEC Rare Plants or Animals data, which are generalized areas where NY Natural Heritage has data regarding rare animals and/or rare plants, including: all animals or plants listed by NYS as Endangered or Threatened, animals listed as Special Concern, plants listed as Rare, and some species not officially listed by NYS, but which are rare in the State. The second dataset is the NYSDEC Significant Natural Communities dataset, which “displays locations of rare or high-quality wetlands, forests, grasslands, ponds, streams, and other types of habitats, ecosystems, and ecological areas.” These two datasets are displayed on Map 14 on page 25. Lastly, the Northeast Bird Habitat Conservation Initiative Mapping Tool Data was utilized, provided by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. This data provides habitat quality for a variety of bird species types, including Forest Birds, Scrub/Shrub and Young Forest Birds, Grassland Birds, Wetlands and Marsh Birds, and Coasts and Shoreline Birds. The habitat quality is ranked from zero to seven, with seven being the highest quality habitat. How the team allocated points based on these three datasets is summarized in the table below:

Data	Metric	Points Allocated
NYSDEC Rare Plants or Animals	Within or partially within generalized Rare Plants/Animal area	1
NYSDEC Significant Natural Community	Within or partially within Significant Natural Community area	1
Northeast Bird Habitat Conservation Initiative Mapping Tool Data	Habitat Quality 0-1	0
	Habitat Quality 2-3	1
	Habitat Quality 4-5	2
	Habitat Quality 6-7	3

## Grasslands + Meadows

For the Grassland + Meadows category, the team used the National Land Cover Database. They identified 2 of the 16 classes as Grassland or Meadows - 71: Grassland/Herbaceous, and 81: Pasture/Hay. Refer to Map 9 on page 20 to see the land cover distribution across Lansing. For the purposes of this analysis, the team used the percentage of a parcel that was covered by one of these two categories to assign points to each parcel, as described in the table below:

Data	Metric	Points Allocated
National Land Cover Database: Forest Classes (71: Grassland/Herbaceous, 81: Pasture/Hay)	0-10% of parcel covered	0
	11-40% of parcel covered	1
	41-70% of parcel covered	2
	71-100% of parcel covered	3

## Steep Slopes

For Steep Slopes, the team utilized Tompkins County Elevation Data. For the purposes of this analysis, slopes greater than 15% were deemed as steep slopes, which are shown on Map 4 on page 15. The team assigned parcels points based on the percentage of the lot that was covered in steep slopes, as shown in the table below:

Data	Metric	Points Allocated
Tompkins County Elevation Data	0-10% of parcel covered	0
	11-40% of parcel covered	1
	41-70% of parcel covered	2
	71-100% of parcel covered	3

## Unique Natural Areas

For Unique Natural Areas, the team used Tompkins County UNAs (as described on page 21 and displayed on Map 10 in the Inventory + Analysis section), as the dataset. They assigned points to each parcel based on the percentage of the property that is covered by a UNA, as shown in the table below:

Data	Metric	Points Allocated
Tompkins County Unique Natural Area Designations	0% of parcel covered	0
	1-5% of parcel covered	1
	6-25% of parcel covered	2
	25% + of parcel covered	3

## Susceptibility to Development

For the Susceptibility to Development category, the project team used three data sets to determine the ranking of each property. The first dataset was existing public sewer data. If a parcel was within 0.3 miles of public sewer service, it received a point. Similarly, the team used public water data, and parcels within 0.3 miles of water service also received a point. Lastly, if a parcel was in the Residential - Moderate Density (R-2), Residential-Mixed Use (R-3), Commercial Mixed Use (B-1), Commercial (B-2), or Industrial/Research (IR) Zoning Districts, it received a point. The team selected these zoning districts due to their intent of allowing a higher density development than what is permitted elsewhere in the Town, whether residential or non-residential.

Data	Metric	Points Allocated
Town of Lansing Sewer Data	Within 0.3 mile of Sewer Service	1
Town of Lansing Water Data	Within 0.3 mile of Water Service	1
Town of Lansing Zoning Map	Within the R-2, R-3, B-1, B-2, or IR Districts	1



Photo: Carol Green, Town Resident

# Ranking Results

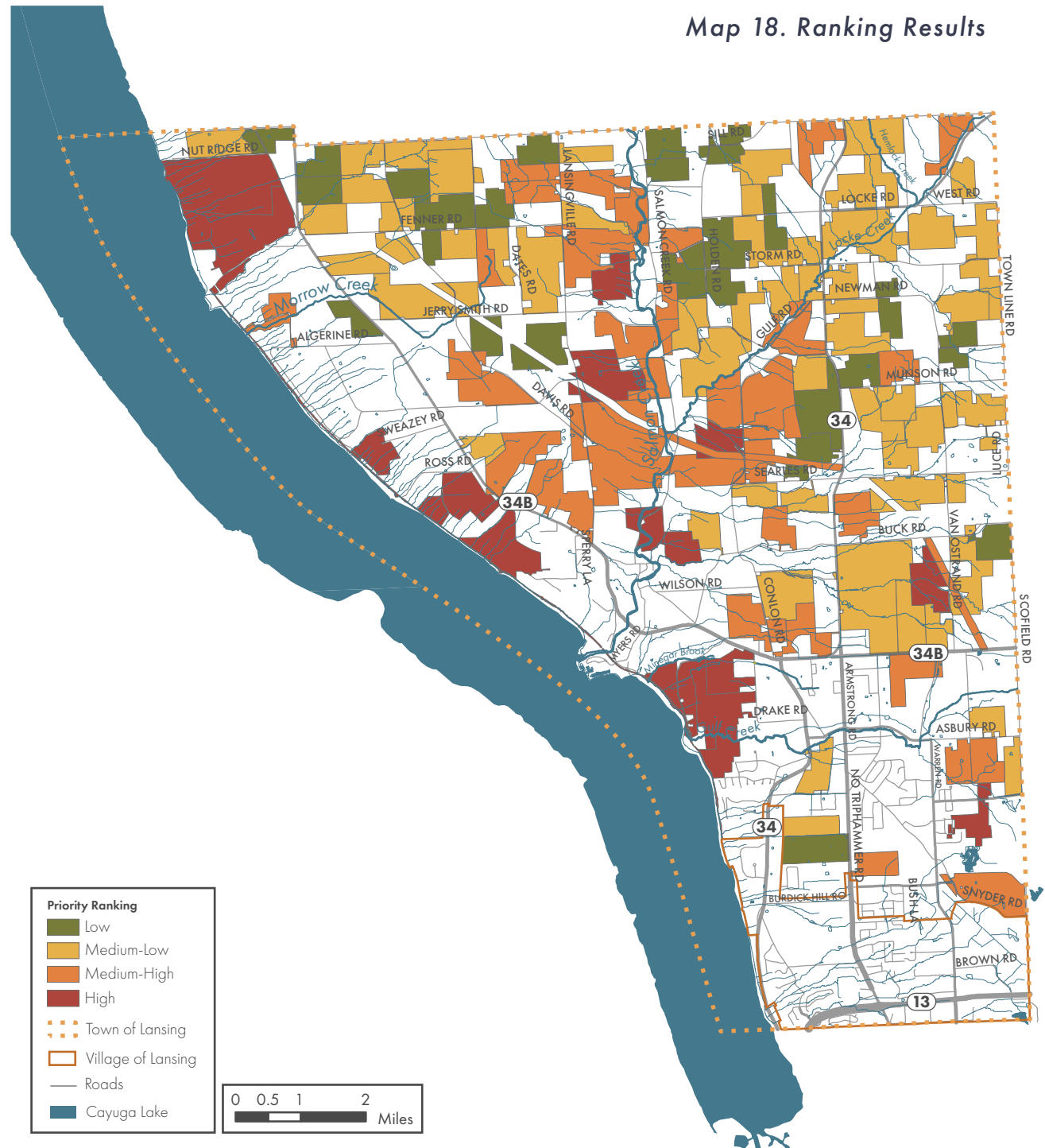
As mentioned previously, once the project team assigned unweighted scores to each parcel for each category, each value was assigned a weighting factor for each category. The project team then summed the weighted values for each parcel to develop an overall comparative ranking, which translated into "High," "Medium-High," "Medium-Low," and "Low" priority parcels in regards to open space value. The results of this ranking process are displayed on Map 18 at right.

This analysis identifies 18%, or 22 parcels as low priority parcels, meaning they had the lowest scores comparatively. The analysis ranked 41%, or 49 parcels as medium-low priority, 26% or 31 parcels as medium-high priority, and 14% or 17 parcels as high priority. As seen on Map 18, the majority of the highest ranking parcels are along the Cayuga Lake Shore, as well as some adjacent to the Salmon and Locke Creek corridors.

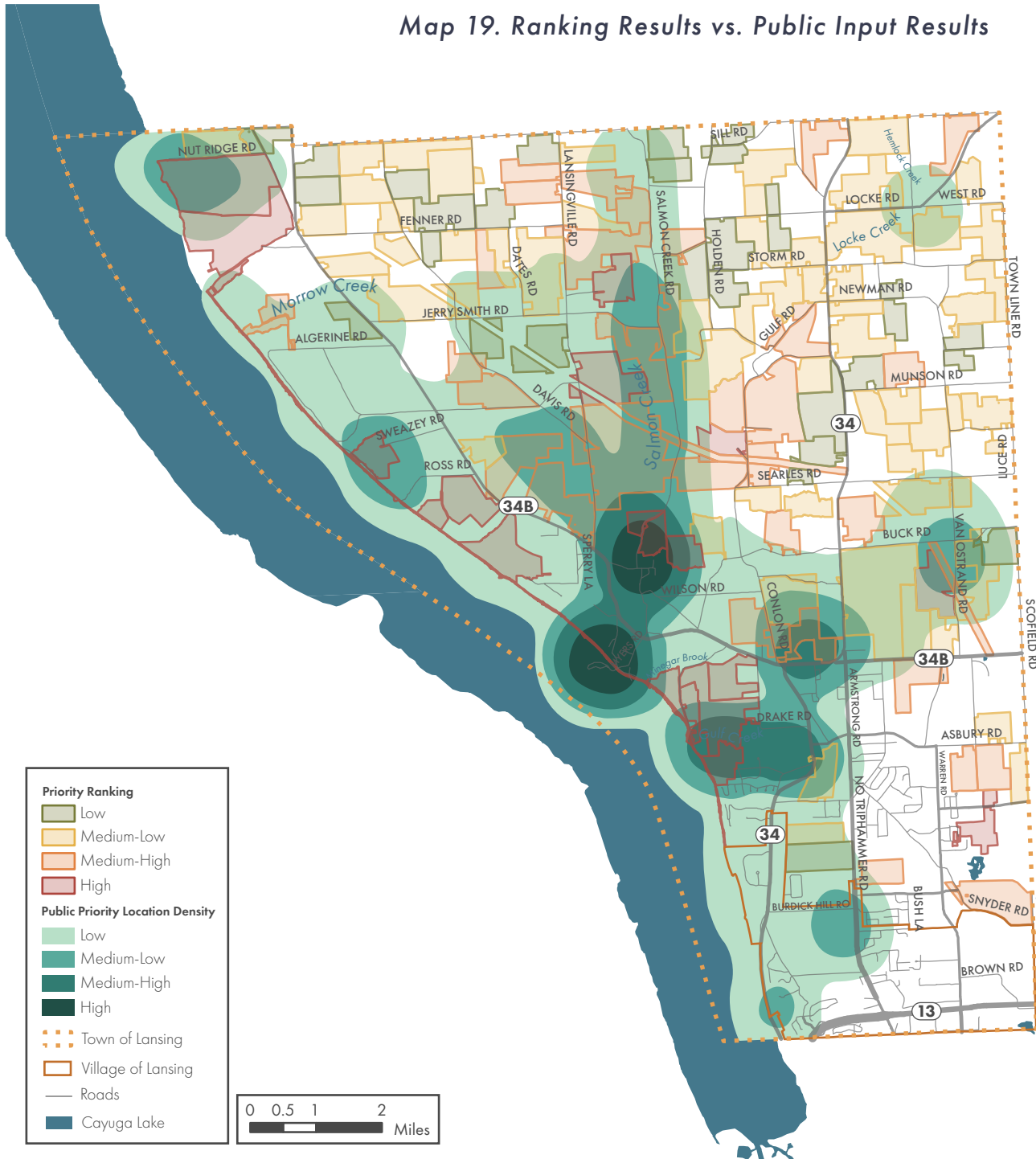
Several of the high ranking parcels are currently under operation of the Finger Lakes Land Trust, including the Bell Station Property and the Cayuga Cliffs property. This helps to validate the ranking process, as these have already been identified as high priority areas for conservation by local conservation experts and residents alike.

For more details, a full size map and the individual parcel rankings are available as in the Plan Appendix.

Map 18. Ranking Results



Map 19. Ranking Results vs. Public Input Results



## Alignment with Community Input

Map 19 shows a comparison between the priority ranking results and the results of the crowdsourced mapping performed as a part of the community survey.

Part of the survey entailed community members locating priority locations for conservation on an interactive mapping application. The density of points is represented on Map 19 as the blue areas, ranging from most dense to least dense.

As shown below, there is significant overlap between where community members identified important locations for conservation, and which areas of the Town were ranked highest as a part of the OSI.

The locations with the highest density of publicly identified priority locations are Myers Park/Salt Point, and the hamlet of Ludlowville. While those immediate areas had few parcels of 70 or more acres in size, the adjacent parcels were some of the highest ranking parcels in the OSI.



# High Priority Parcels

The land uses, per the New York State property classification codes, of the 17 parcels identified as high priority are as follows:

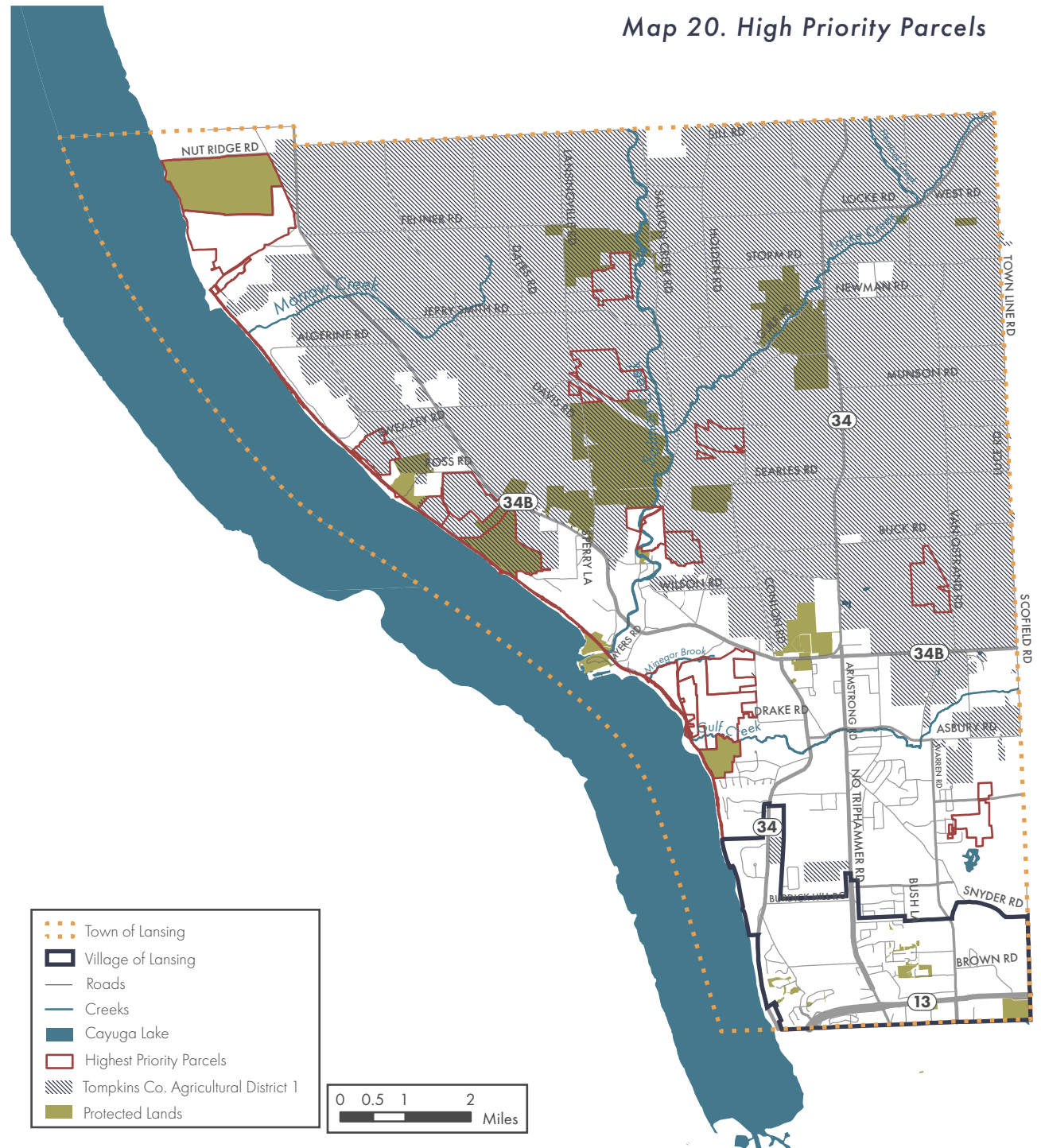
- Four vacant parcels
- Three agriculture parcels
- Three industrial parcels
- Two community service parcels (including the Bell Station property)
- Two residential parcels
- One recreation and entertainment parcel (the Lansing Rod & Gun club)
- One public service parcel (Norfolk Southern railroad right of way)
- One commercial parcel

Three of the high priority parcels are currently protected:

- Bell Station Preserve
- Cayuga Cliffs Preserve
- Edwards Lake Cliffs Preserve

Eight of the high priority parcels are within Tompkins County Agricultural District 1.

Map 20. High Priority Parcels



# Community Solar & Open Space Conservation



The Town of Lansing has seen increasing interest in large-scale solar farm development in recent years due to the presence of large swaths of undeveloped land, and the location of significant transmission lines that transect the Town. The benefits of solar energy are numerous and well-established, and the Town supports the increased uptake of renewable energy. However, it is important to the community to balance the benefits of solar farm development with the benefits of maintaining precious wildlife habitat, agricultural land, and natural resources. This Plan should act as a tool for the various boards to use when considering where and to what extent solar should be permitted in the Town. Furthermore, the Town should utilize the Scenic Resources Inventory to identify if any identified viewsheds would be hampered by the installation of solar fields. Thoughtful siting, buffering, and screening should be utilized to mitigate any potential visual impacts.

*Photo: Samuel Donovan, Town Resident*



## IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

This section will outline tools and tactics that the Town can employ to achieve its overall open space vision. These options range from outright purchase of land within the Town, to land use regulations that will help to steer future development in a direction that supports conservation efforts. Each option is briefly described, alongside estimated cost ranges, potential partners, and an estimated timeframe for completion.

Photo: Lansing Resident



# Implementation Options

The tables on the following page display various strategies for accomplishing the Vision and Goals of this Plan. The implementation options should be viewed as a toolkit of potential actions the Town or its partners may undertake as opportunities arise. The types of strategies include the following:

- **Potential Amendments to Development Regulations** - Zoning or other local land use regulation tools
- **Land Conservation** - Direct land acquisition or conservation techniques
- **Other** - Various actions that do not fall into the first two categories

Each of the strategies include a brief description, a generalized cost estimate, potential partners, and an estimated timeframe. Timeframes are meant to describe the estimated time an action will take to complete, not how soon the action item should be accomplished. The generalized cost estimates, based on order of magnitude, use the symbols below to reflect the following estimated cost ranges:

**\$:** Under \$50,000

**\$\$:** Between \$50,000 and \$100,000

**\$\$\$:** Over \$100,000

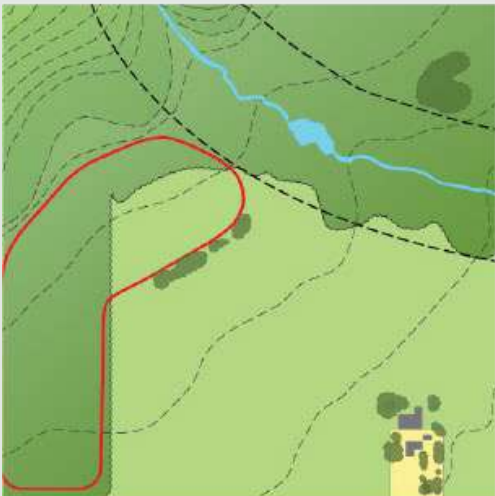
**N/A:** No Cost

Within the potential partners column, the project team highlighted entities that are identified as a potential lead agency in bold text. Some of the implementation options may several potential lead agencies based on the project, and those strategies do not have lead agencies identified.

# Conservation Subdivisions

Conservation Subdivision Design (CSD) is an alternative approach to the traditional land subdivision process, in which lots are concentrated in a particular area, while allowing the remaining land to be maintained as undeveloped or open space to protect natural resources, agricultural lands, or scenic viewsheds. Currently, the Town permits CSD as a part of their existing subdivision regulations (Chapter 235, Subdivision of Land). In order to encourage further open space preservation in the midst of residential development, the Town could bolster these regulations in a number of ways, including but not limited to:

- Providing a density bonus - incentivizing developers to use CSD by allowing for more units per acre within a concentrated area.
- Requiring the use of CSD in certain areas, such as within or adjacent to highly ranked areas as identified in the OSI, or the presence of certain environmental features such as steep slopes, water resources, or scenic viewsheds.
- Requiring the use of CSD in certain zoning districts, or for a certain threshold of proposed lots (i.e. subdivisions of 10 lots or more).



**EXISTING LANDSCAPE**

**SUBDIVISION SPRAWL**

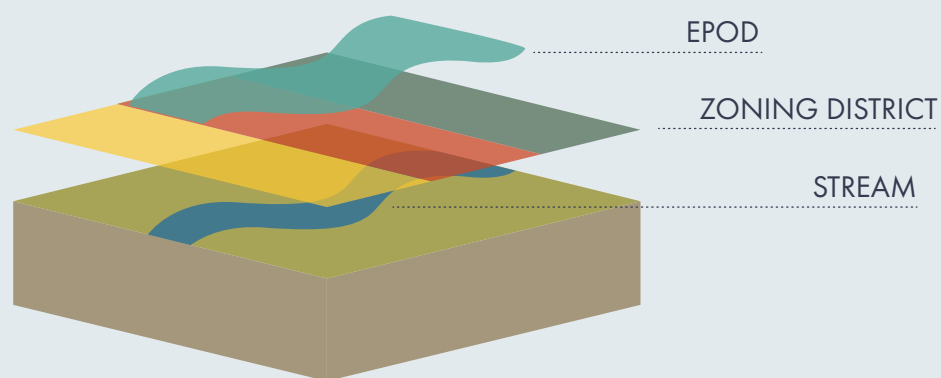
**CONSERVATION NEIGHBORHOOD**

Source: Better Towns Toolkit

TYPE	STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	COST	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
<b>Potential Amendments to Development Regulations</b>	<b>Promote conservation subdivisions</b>	Review existing conservation subdivision design regulations for opportunities to bolster or encourage their application, where appropriate.	\$	Town Board, Planning Board, CAC, <b>Town Planning Dept.</b>	Short
	<b>Environmental Protection Overlay Districts (EPODs)</b>	Develop overlay zoning districts that provide protection for environmentally sensitive areas (typically wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, etc.).	\$	Town Board, Planning Board, CAC, <b>Town Planning Dept.</b>	Medium
	<b>Development Review Process</b>	Reference the OSCP as a relevant plan or study in the development review process.	N/A	Town Board, <b>Planning Board</b> , CAC, Town Planning Dept.	Ongoing
	<b>Mature tree retention</b>	Require development to maintain trees on lot over a certain diameter at breast height (DBH).	\$	Town Board, Planning Board, CAC, <b>Town Planning Dept.</b>	Short
	<b>Habitat corridor preservation</b>	Identify and require preservation of local habitat corridors during development process.	\$	Town Board, Planning Board, <b>CAC</b> , Town Planning Dept.	Medium
	<b>Open space requirements</b>	Modify the code to require development to maintain a certain acreage or percentage of a lot as open space - to be maintained in perpetuity.	\$	Town Board, Planning Board, CAC, <b>Town Planning Dept.</b>	Short
	<b>Open Space Incentive Zoning</b>	Allow for developer to gain certain benefits in exchange for open space conservation and/or monetary funds to support conservation efforts.	\$	Town Board, Planning Board, CAC, <b>Town Planning Dept.</b>	Medium
	<b>Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway Overlay District</b>	Consider the development of a Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway Overlay District to protect scenic viewsheds along Route 34B.	N/A - \$	Town Board, Planning Board, <b>CAC</b> , Town Planning Dept.	Short

# Environmental Protection Overlay Districts

Environmental Protection Overlay Districts (EPODs) are a type of overlay district that provide special controls over land development in sensitive environmental areas to protect natural resources and vital environmental features. Their intent is to avoid negative impacts to the ecology and environment of the Town by imposing additional regulations and or prohibitions on certain types of development in the designated EPOD areas. The types of environmental features used to define EPOD areas include, but are not limited to floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, woodlands, and stream corridors.



*Adapted from "Creating Conservation Overlay Zoning: A Guide for Communities in the Hudson River Estuary Watershed."*



TYPE	STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	COST	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
<b>Land Conservation</b>	<b>New York State Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program through Tompkins County</b>	Participate in the NYS PDR - a voluntary program that involves a landowner selling the development rights of a parcel. The landowner maintains all other rights and responsibilities, and can use or sell it for purposes allowed in the easement.	\$\$\$	<b>Tompkins Co.</b> , Cornell Cooperative Extension, NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets, Town Planning Dept.	Short
	<b>Purchase of land</b>	Acquire undeveloped land. Requires significant capital for the purchase and long term stewardship of land.	\$\$\$	Town Board, Town Planning Dept., CAC, FLLT, Tompkins Co. , NYS Parks	Ongoing
	<b>Conservation Easement</b>	Create a voluntary legal agreement that protects the natural resources of a parcel of land by restricting future development permanently, but could allow other activities such as farming or public access. Agreement is held between landowner and a government or land trust. Easement can be donated or sold.	N/A - \$\$\$	Town Board, Town Planning Dept., CAC, FLLT, Tompkins Co. , American Farmland Trust, Open Space Institute, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets, US Dept. of Agriculture	Ongoing
	<b>Transfer of Development Rights</b>	Create a voluntary program that involves a landowner selling the development rights of their property within a certain area (sending area) to a developer, who can then use these rights to increase the density of development within another specified area (receiving area).	\$\$ - \$\$\$	Town Board, <b>Town Planning Dept.</b> , Planning Board, CAC, Agriculture & Farmland Protection Committee	Long
	<b>Tompkins Co. Natural Infrastructure Capital Program</b>	Participate in the County's Natural Infrastructure Capital Program, which provides funding to protect natural systems that can help mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change. Tompkins County will cover up to 1/3 of the assessed value of an eligible property, up to a maximum of \$200,000.	\$\$\$	<b>Tompkins Co.</b> , FLLT, Town Planning Department, Town Board, CAC	Long

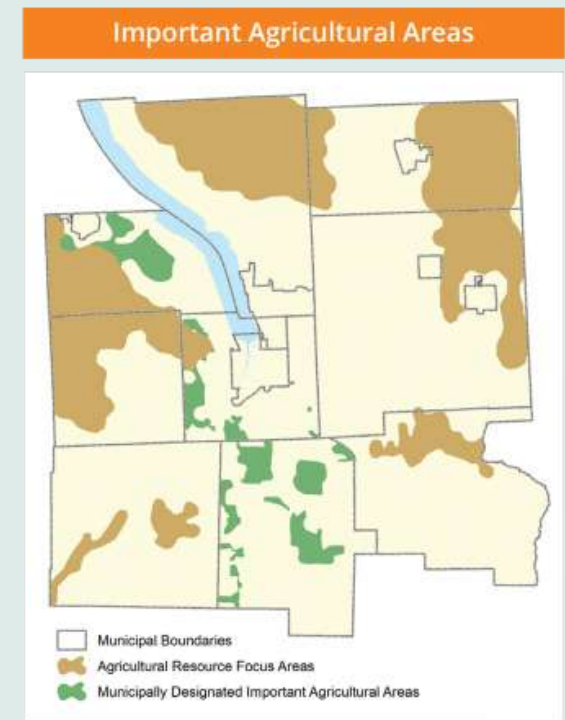


# Tompkins County Programs

The Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability is committed to the goal of preserving and enhancing the County's natural features and working rural landscapes. This is clearly stated within the County's Comprehensive Plan, which states it is the policy of Tompkins County to:

- Preserve natural features and ecosystems, especially within the Natural Features Focus Areas.
- Protect farmland within the Agricultural Resource Focus Areas for agricultural use.
- Reduce the adverse impacts to native species and ecosystems caused by invasive organisms and climate change.
- Promote best management practices that protect natural resources and productive working lands.
- Improve public access to outdoor recreation resources and opportunities.

Several of the identified priority areas for conservation as identified in this OSCP are also identified within the Natural Features Focus Areas of the County Comprehensive Plan, including Salmon Creek and the Cayuga Lake shoreline. Additionally, the northern area of the Town is identified as one of the Agricultural Resource Focus Areas in the Plan. To achieve the stated policies of the County as well as the vision of this Plan, the Town should continue to collaborate with the County to implement policies, programs, and actions that are in support of preserving and celebrating the Town and County's abundant ecological resources. This may include participation in two of the County's programs: the **Natural Infrastructure Capital Program** and the **Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)** program. Both programs support the protection of open space through either the acquisition of land, or the creation of a conservation easement.



Source: Tompkins County 2015 Comprehensive Plan

TYPE	STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	COST	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
<b>Other</b>	<b>Low impact/ Green Development</b>	Utilize green infrastructure and low impact design to lessen the impacts of development on natural resources.	\$	Town Planning Dept., Planning Board, <b>Private Developers</b>	Ongoing
	<b>Conservation Board Establishment</b>	Gain approval by the Town Board and adopt the OSCP as the Town's official index of open space. This will result in the existing CAC being eligible to become a Conservation Board (CB).	N/A - \$	<b>Town Board</b> , CAC	Short
	<b>Increase Administrative Capacity of Town</b>	Add staff to the Town's municipal operations, or consider retaining grant writer and/or consultants to allow for increased administrative capacity and more active open space conservation efforts, such as applying for grant funds.	\$\$ - \$\$\$\$	<b>Town Board</b> , Town Staff	Long

# Case Study: Warwick, NY

The Town of Warwick, located in Orange County, has created a strong commitment to preservation of its natural resources and rural character, stemming from their 1999 Comprehensive Plan and 2006 Community Preservation Project Plan. Over the past two decades, the Town has since taken a proactive approach to protecting and preserving agriculture and open space by implementing several tools, which are summarized briefly below:

## Community Preservation Fund

In 2005, New York State Town Law and State Tax Law was amended to establish, through local referendum, a Community Preservation Fund (CPF). The CPF is supported by revenues from a 3/4 percent real estate transfer tax. The CPF funds can only be used for projects identified in the Community Preservation Project Plan, such as the initiatives described below.

## Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program

In 2000, voters of the Town of Warwick approve a PDR program and a \$9.5 million bond for “the acquisition of open spaces and areas, including, among other things, development rights to protect and conserve agricultural lands, non-farm open spaces, and other open areas.” As of 2006, the Town had purchased the development rights of approximately 3,400 acres of open space and farmland. The program is completely voluntary for private landowners.

## Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program

The Town’s TDR program was established in 2002, which permits a voluntary transfer of development rights from land within their Agricultural Protection Overlay District (sending district) to their suburban residential or hamlet zoning districts (receiving district). Developers in the receiving district can increase the density of their development by purchasing these development rights from landowners in the Agricultural Protection Overlay District.

## Incentive Zoning

The Town allows developers to increase their development density in an exchange for a fee paid to the Town, which is then used to purchase development rights from farmers.

# Funding Sources

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
Property tax incentives	NYS Conservation Easement Tax Credit/Forest Land Exemptions
Real Estate Transfer Tax	One time fee paid by buyer when land is sold - typically 1-2% of sale price. Funds can be dedicated for land conservation projects.
Municipal open space bonds/conservation funds	Issuance of a bond to finance open space preservation - allows Town to raise capital and repay the debt over time. A bond can be placed on a ballot during a local election, or permissive referendum, which allows the Town board to take an action without a vote - but can be petitioned by voters.
Continue to work with Finger Lakes Land Trust	Continue working relationship with FLLT to identify key properties and to enhance/steward existing conservation lands
Recreation Fees	Establish recreation fee, part of which can go towards land acquisition/maintenance
Open Space Impact Fees	One time charge assessed on new development in order to help pay for new/expanded public facilities - which could go towards open space conservation efforts, among other things.
Private fundraising	The Town can encourage/support/host fundraising through events, dinners, festivals, etc.
Grant funding	Apply for state, federal, and private grant programs to assist in property acquisition, programing, and education/outreach. See the following pages for potential grand funding sources.

# Finger Lakes Land Trust



The Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT), incorporated in 1989, is the lead conservation organization in Tompkins County and the Finger Lakes region as a whole, whose mission is:

***“to conserve forever the lands and waters of the Finger Lakes Region, ensuring scenic vistas, clean water, local foods, and wild places for everyone.”***

FLLT has been an essential partner for the Town of Lansing in previous land conservation efforts, most notably the Bell Station property acquisition in 2022, which conserved 287 acres of land along 3,400 feet of shoreline along Cayuga Lake. Moving forward, the Town will continue to partner with FLLT for conservation efforts and support the mission and values of the organization.



# Potential Grant Funding

GRANT	FUNDING BODY	TYPE
<b>Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act</b>	New York State	Various
<b>Environmental Protection Fund Grants Program for Parks, Preservation, and Heritage (EPF)</b>	New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP)	Property Acquisition
<b>Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP)</b>	NYS Department of Environmental Conservation	Property Acquisition
<b>Source Water Buffer Program</b>	New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets	Funding for Conservation Easements
<b>Farmland Protection Implementation Grants Program</b>	New York State Departments of Agriculture and Markets	Farmland Preservation and Conservation Easement Projects
<b>Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Community Assistance Program</b>	National Park Service	Partnership
<b>Rivers, Trails and Conservation assistance program: Land and Habitat Conservation</b>	National Park Service	Partnership
<b>Conservation and Innovation Grants</b>	USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service	Innovative Conservation Projects

<b>GRANT</b>	<b>FUNDING BODY</b>	<b>TYPE</b>
<b>Conservation Stewardship Program</b>	<b>USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NCRS)</b>	Technical and Financial Assistance Program
<b>Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)</b>	<b>USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service</b>	Technical and Financial Assistance Program
<b>New Climate Change Adaptation Activity</b>	<b>United States Agency International Development</b>	Funding/ Cooperative Award
<b>Regional Conservation Program</b>	<b>USDA-NCRS</b>	Discretionary
<b>Legacy Resource Management Program</b>	<b>US Department of Defense</b>	Cooperative Agreement
<b>Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) - State and Local Assistance Division</b>	<b>National Park Service</b>	Property Acquisition
<b>Hazard Mitigation Grant Program</b>	<b>Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)</b>	Property Acquisition
<b>Community Forest Program (CFP)</b>	<b>US Forest Service</b>	Property Acquisition
<b>Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)</b>	<b>USDA-NCRS</b>	Property Acquisition

# Next Steps

The OSCP is intended to give the Town of Lansing and its various boards and committees a guidemap for future decision-making and investment regarding land conservation as the Town continues to grow and evolve. In order to realize the Vision of this Plan, the Town should consider moving forward with the following activities/tasks:

## Maintaining the OSI

The analysis performed for the OSI depicts the priority ranking based on a static moment in time. Land uses, natural features, and most importantly community priorities will continue to shift over time. It is important for the Town to review the results of the OSI on a periodic basis to ensure that the priority ranking results maintain their relevancy. This may entail shifting the weighting of the ranking matrix to account for changes in community priorities, updating the underlying scoring based on newly available data, or the addition of new factors to be considered. The Town also may choose to expand the analysis of the OSI to a larger amount of parcels, based on a lower land area threshold.

## Coordination with Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability

As discussed earlier in the OSCP, Tompkins County has several programs aimed towards open space conservation, as well as several overlapping open space goals. The Town should work to strengthen their relationship with the Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability to leverage their resources and develop a strong working partnership that benefits the efforts of both governments. The Town may consider inviting the County Planning staff to give a presentation to the Town Board regarding their existing land conservation programs to kick start this coordination.

## Continued Public Outreach

This Plan utilized several public outreach methods to engage Lansing residents in the development of the Plan. The CAC and Town should continue to promote awareness of their efforts, educate residents and stakeholders on the benefits of open space conservation, and to identify landowners who may be interested in future conservation of their land.

## Expand the OSI Analysis

The Town may consider expanding the initial analysis of the OSI to include parcels under 70 acres in size, to help provide a more robust picture of the open space assets within the Town.





*Photo: Lansing Resident*

